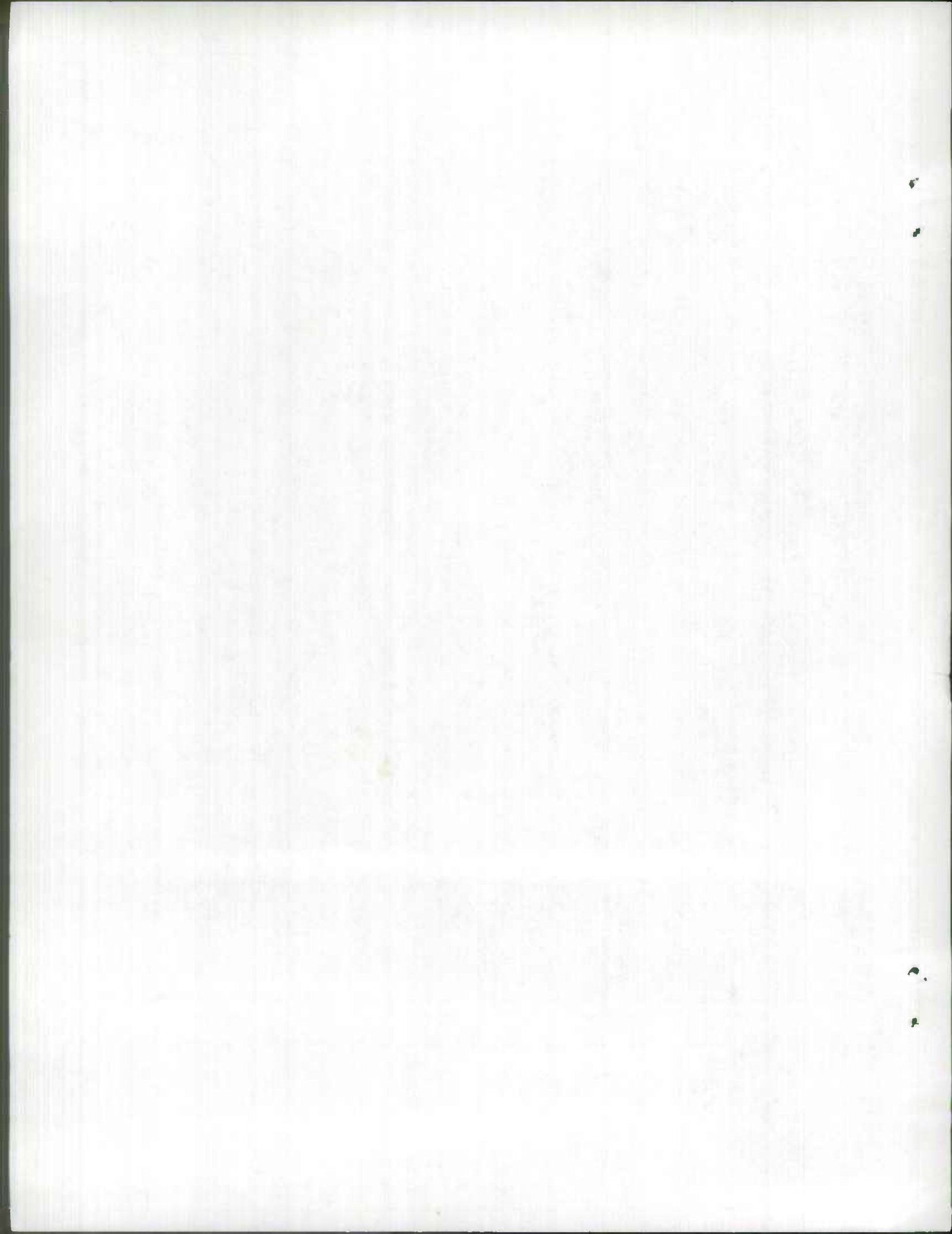


**National
Freeway**



Request for Interstate Determination
for
U.S.48
"The National Freeway"
from
Hancock, Maryland
to
Morgantown, West Virginia



Maryland
Department of
Transportation
STATE HIGHWAY
ADMINISTRATION

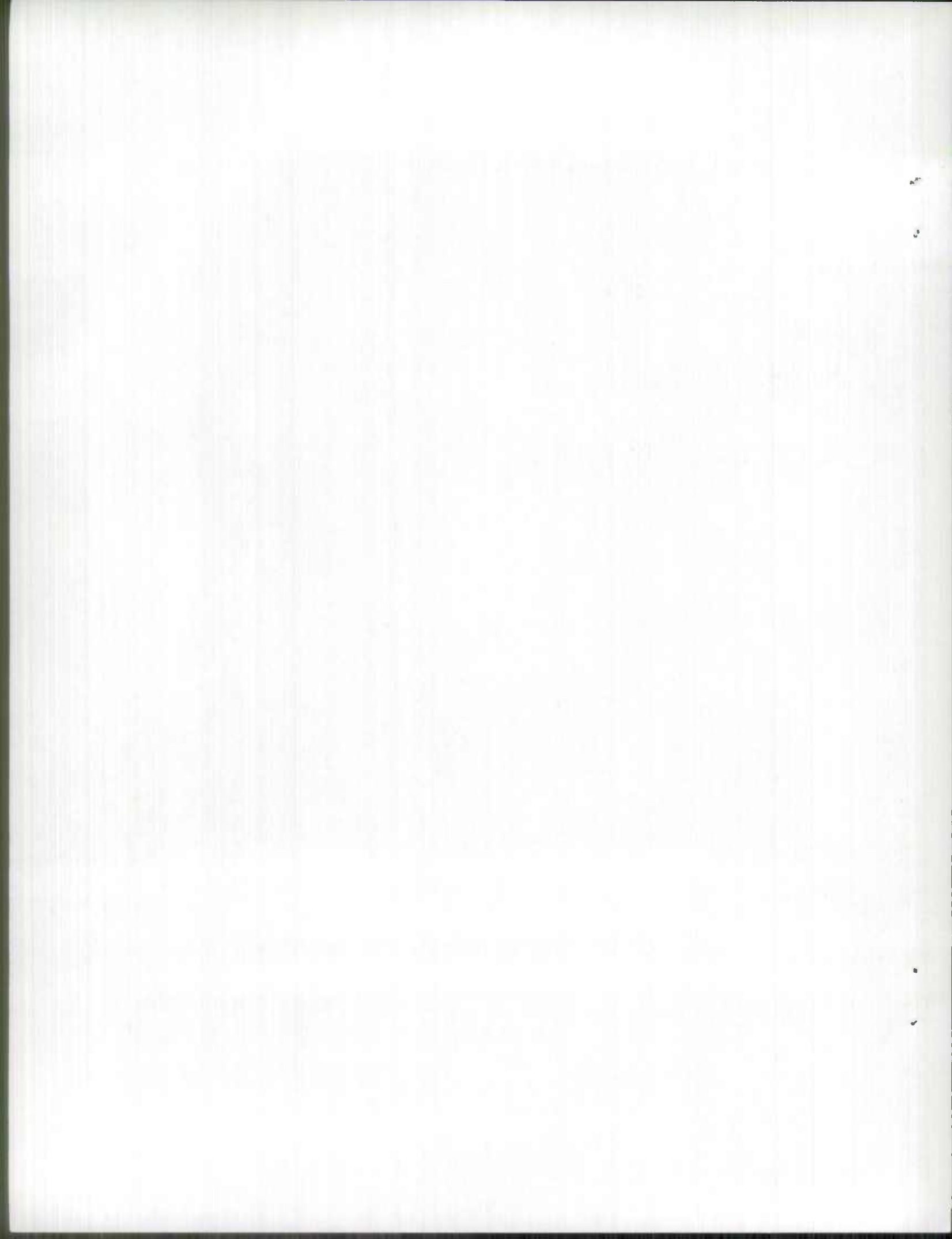
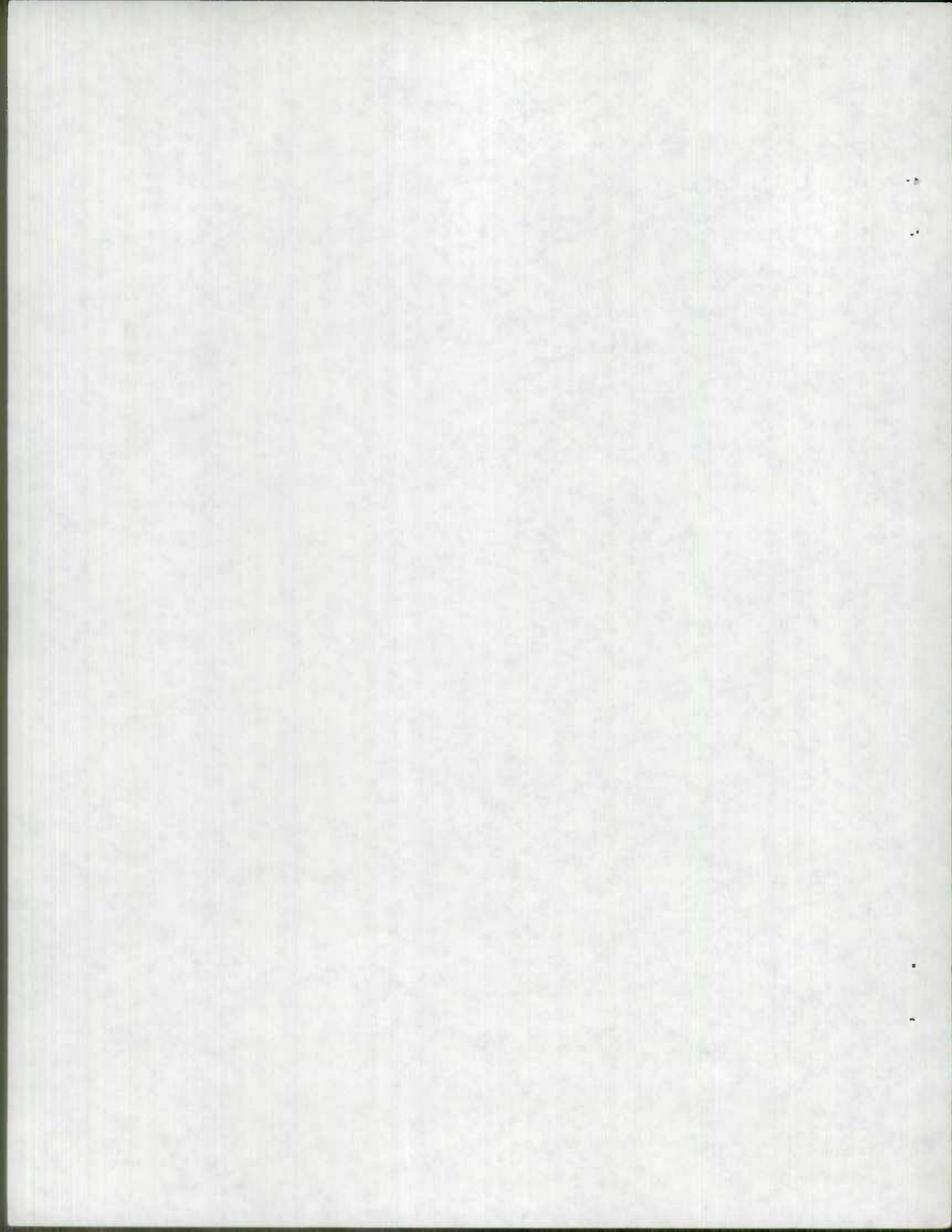


TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
I Summary	1
II Background	3
III Description	4
IV Desirability/Need	5
V Design Characteristics	8
VI Concluding Remarks	11

PLATES

	After Page
I Sub-Regional Map	4
II Regional Map	4



REQUEST TO DESIGNATE US 48 AS INTERSTATE

I. SUMMARY

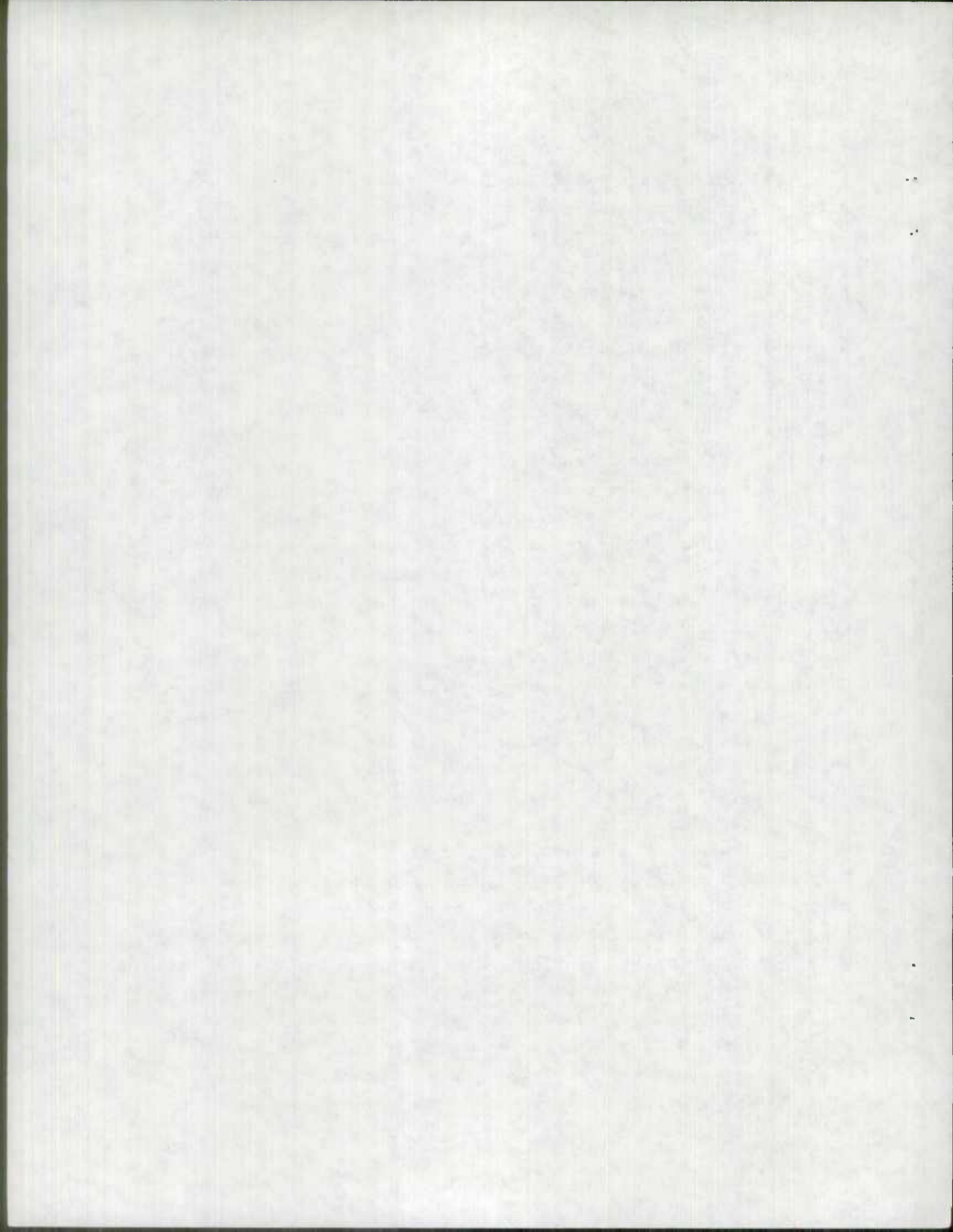
The last section of the National Freeway -- US 48 -- is currently under construction and scheduled to open to traffic by 1991. This "last link" between Hancock, Maryland and I-79 in Morgantown, West Virginia will open the way to safe, high-speed regional travel. (See Plate I)

US 48's placement in the multi-state highway network is strategic, filling a gap in the Interstate System for another major east/west interstate connection. It links the Port of Baltimore directly to Morgantown, WV and points west and facilitates travel to all areas of the country, including the Ports of New York, Philadelphia, and Norfolk.

There is no major east/west interstate connector that runs between I-70/76 in Pennsylvania and I-64 in Virginia. If US 48 is designated Interstate, it would provide motorists and the trucking industry with another major interstate travel route, especially since I-70/76 is toll, will continue as such, and will not be expanded to accommodate additional traffic. (See Plate II)

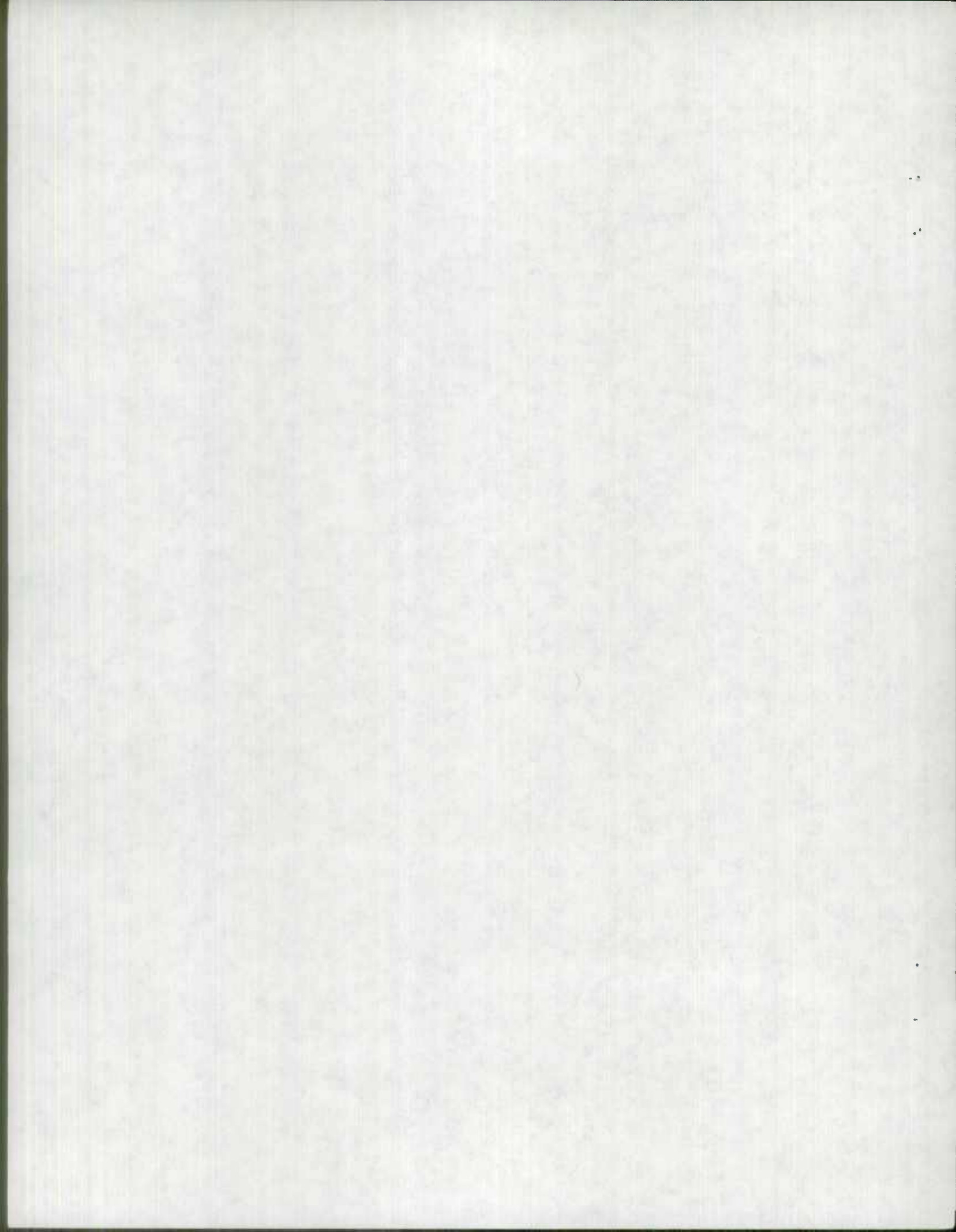
In terms of the regional economy, an Interstate designation through this portion of the Appalachian region would be very beneficial. The Interstate shield will signify to travelers the presence of services and good road conditions and will assist in retaining existing industries, attracting new industries and service facilities, and encourage tourism, further stimulating economic development in the area.

Section 139 of Title 23, US Code, as amended by the 1973 Federal Highway Act specifically addresses additions to the Interstate System. Subsection (a) of this section provides for the addition of an existing route to the Interstate System when such a facility meets the requirements of being on the Federal Aid Primary System and would have a logical addition or connection to the Interstate System. Subsection (b) of this section provides for the addition of a facility which is not yet constructed to Interstate standards, providing that the segment is completed to Interstate standards within twelve years and represents a logical



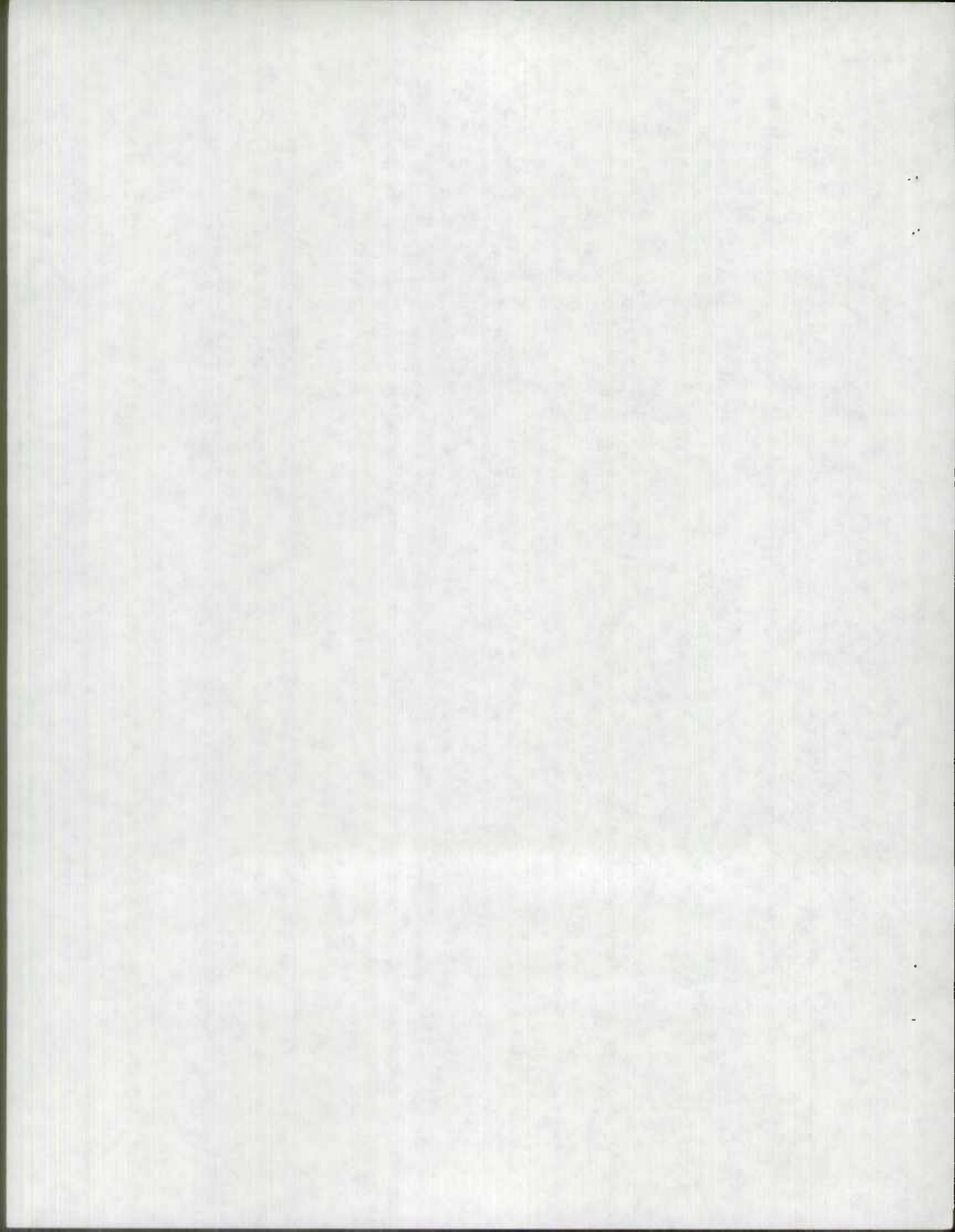
addition or connection. In addition, this subsection specifically prohibits referring to such a highway segment as an Interstate highway in any Federal or State law, regulation, map, document or other record until the highway is completed. The approval authority for Section 139 sub- sections (a) and (b) rests with the US Secretary of Transportation.

This request to designate US 48 as Interstate is submitted under Section (b) as defined above. If designated as such, the National Freeway will open the way not only to safe, high-speed regional and interstate travel, but also to the development of a central and vital Appalachian heartland.



II. BACKGROUND

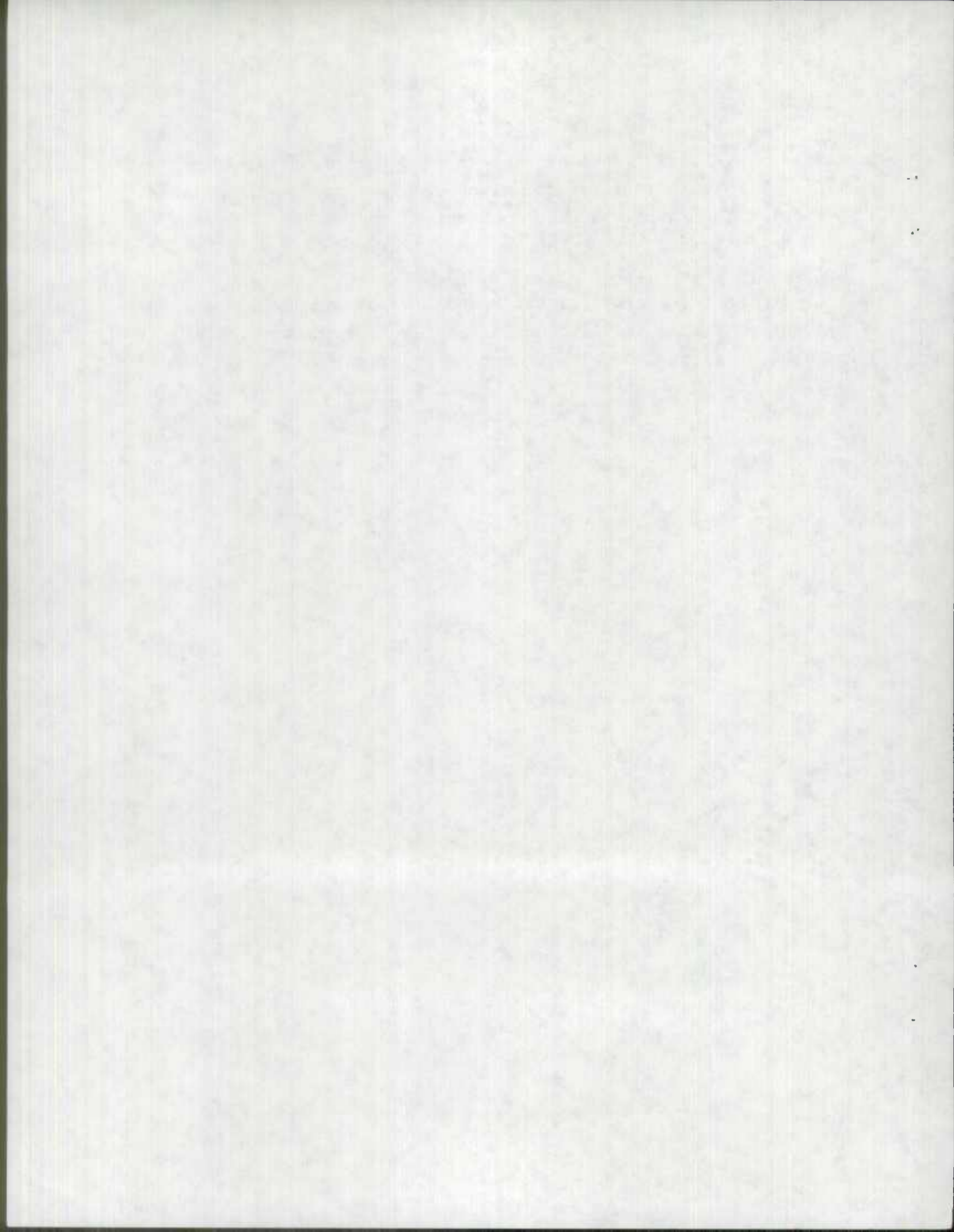
[US 48 was originally conceived in an effort initiated in the 1960s to increase economic activity in the Appalachian Region. The Appalachian Highway Program was the principal funding source for this National Freeway.] A severe cutback of these funds coupled with the fact that other funding categories, such as primary funds, were stretched thin, would have made it difficult, if not impossible, for the State of Maryland to complete the last section of the project, a 19-mile section east of Cumberland from Wolfe Mill to M.V. Smith. A request for 50 million dollars in interstate substitute discretionary money was submitted to the Federal Highway Administration and granted for this "last link" to be completed. The entire 19 mile gap section will be under construction by this summer and open to traffic by 1991.



III. DESCRIPTION

The National Freeway, once complete, will be a one hundred eleven mile long, four lane divided, controlled access Interstate-type facility, with strategic placement in a multi-state highway network. It provides direct connections to I-79 to the west and I-70 to the east, between Morgantown, West Virginia and Hancock, Maryland. (See Plate I)

It links the mid-Atlantic region (Washington, DC, and Baltimore, including the Port of Baltimore) with the central Appalachian Region and major industrial centers in the Ohio River Valley and the midwest. It will also facilitate travel to I-70/76 in Pennsylvania, I-64 in Virginia and West Virginia, and I-81 to I-78 in New York. (See Plate II)



IV. DESIRABILITY/NEED IN THE APPALACHIAN REGION

As can be seen in the following table, unemployment rates in Allegany County (typical of many Appalachian Counties) and Western Maryland are considerably higher than in Maryland as a whole.

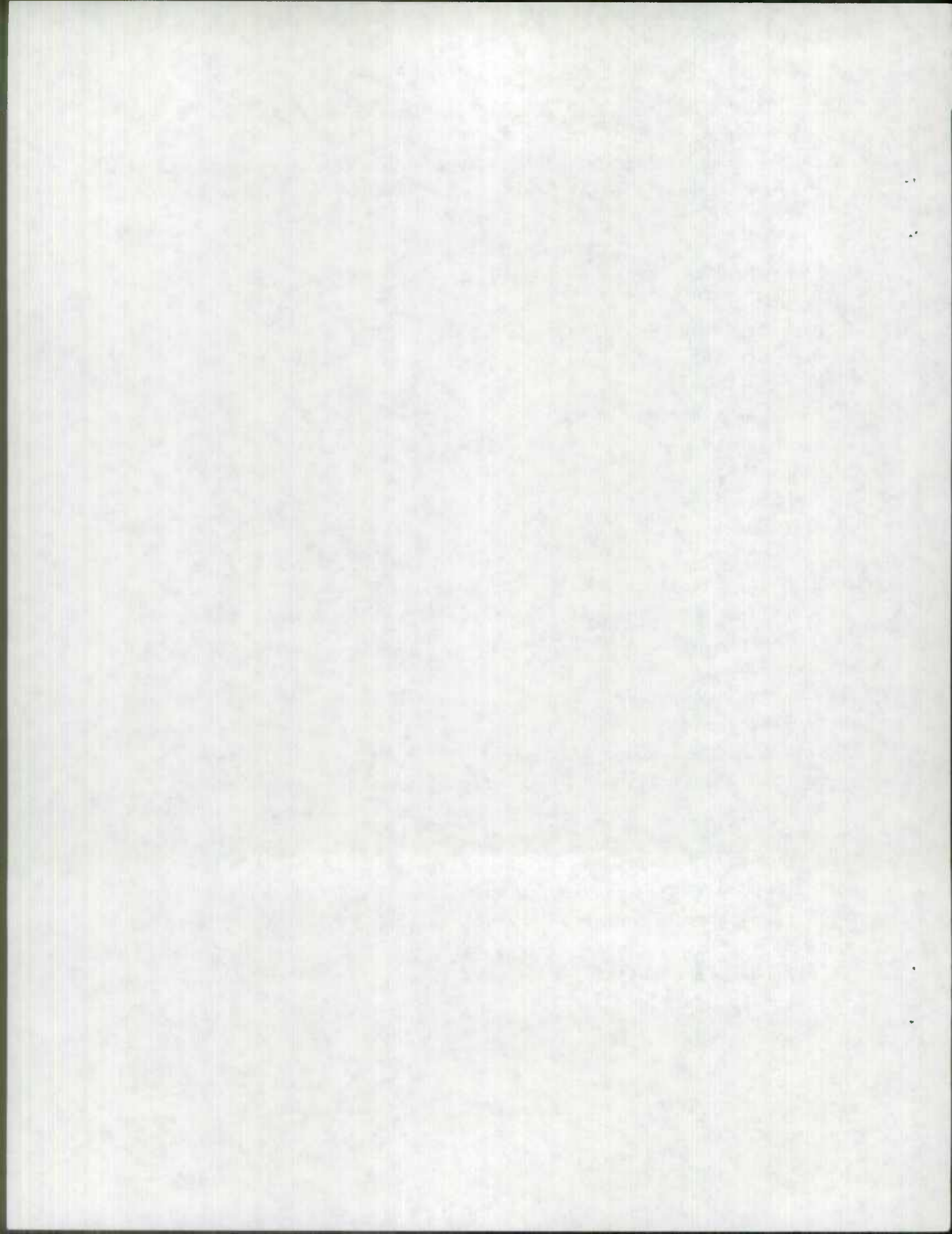
TABLE I

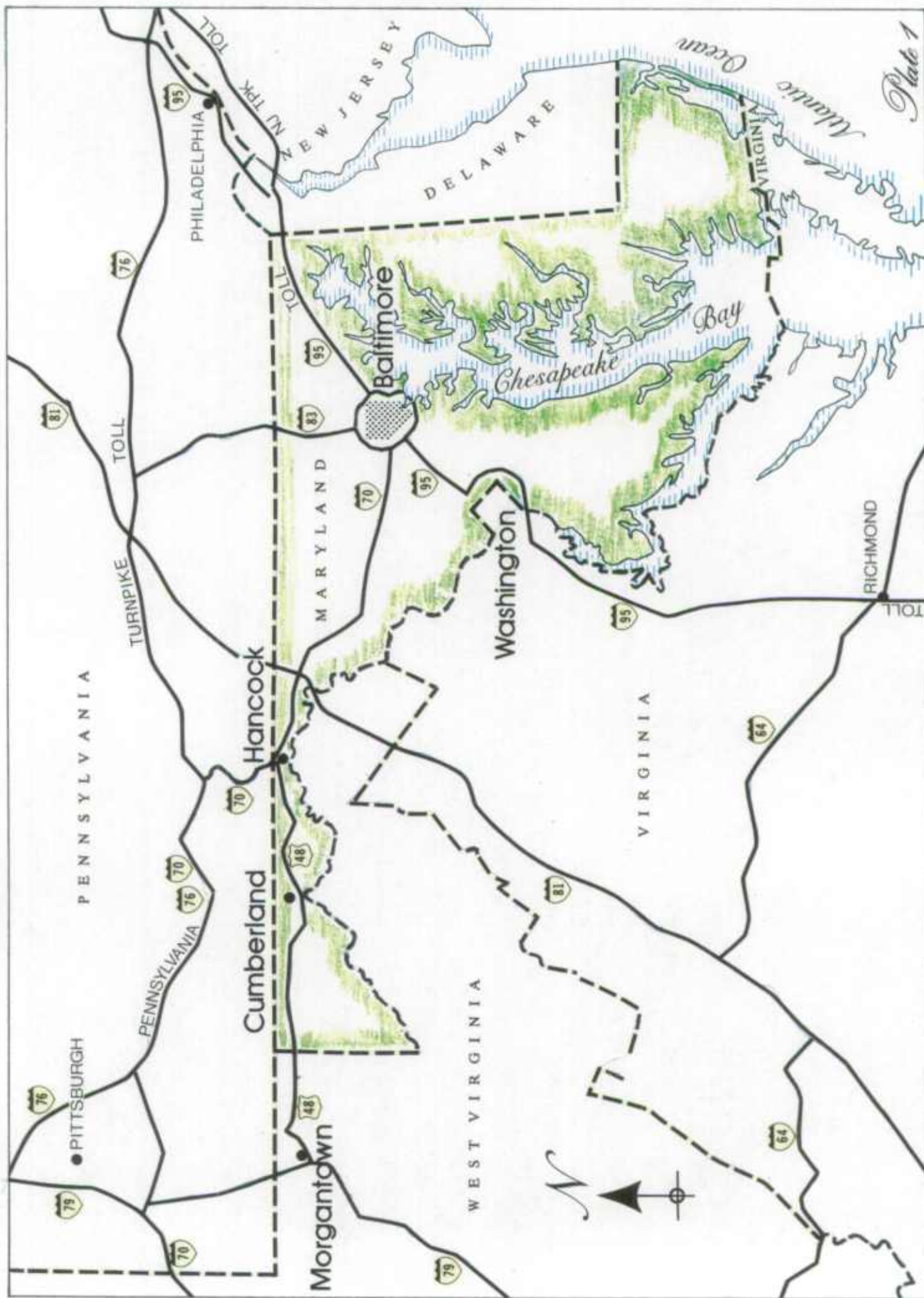
	Unemployment rate (%)		
	<u>Allegany County</u>	<u>Western Maryland</u>	
<u>Maryland</u>			
December 1980	9.5	9.2	6.2
December 1981	14.0	12.6	8.0
December 1982	15.1	13.1	8.4
December 1983	11.7	9.9	5.7
December 1984	9.5	8.6	5.3
December 1985	9.1	8.5	4.6
December 1986	8.9	8.1	4.5
December 1987	10.1	7.9	4.2

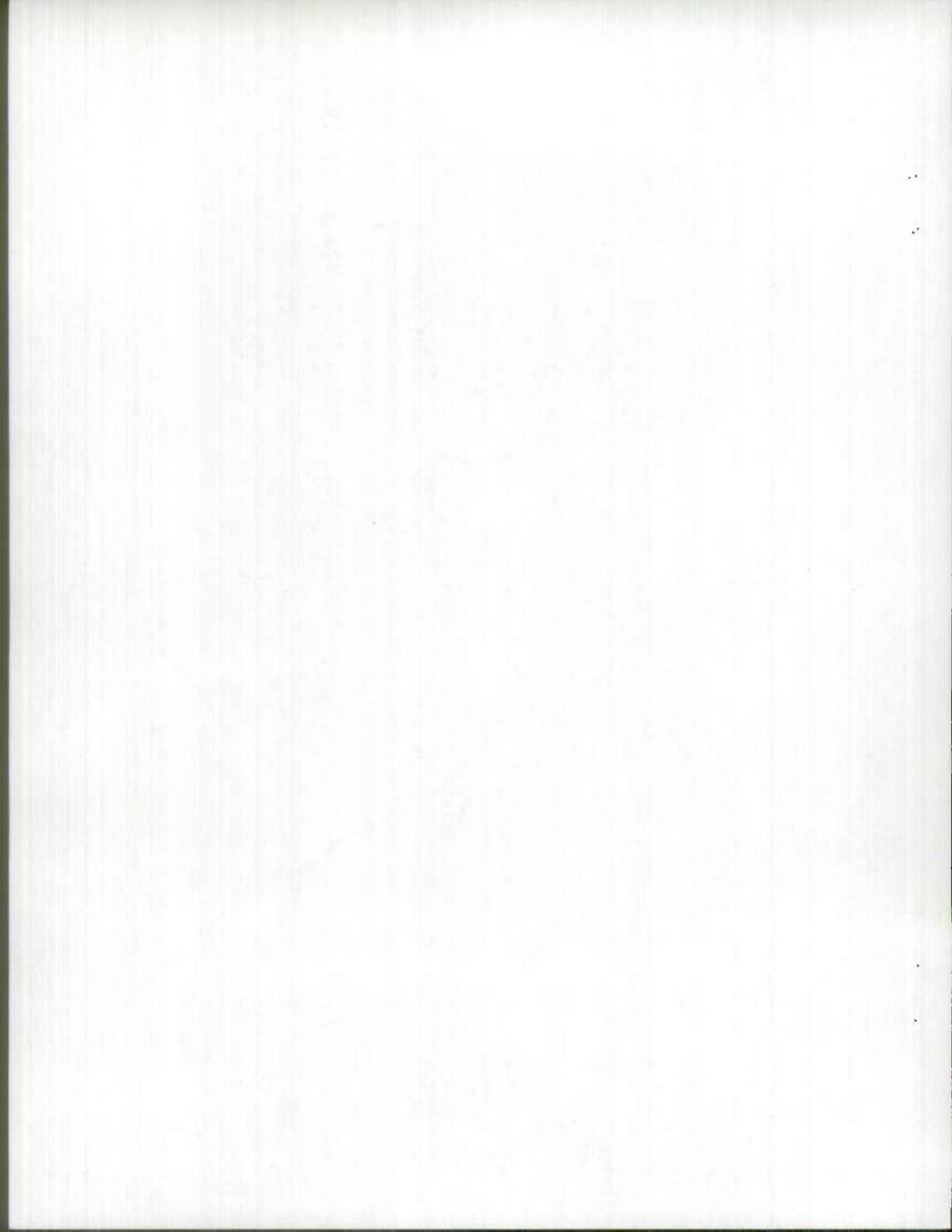
NOTE: West Virginia's data will be added to this table later.

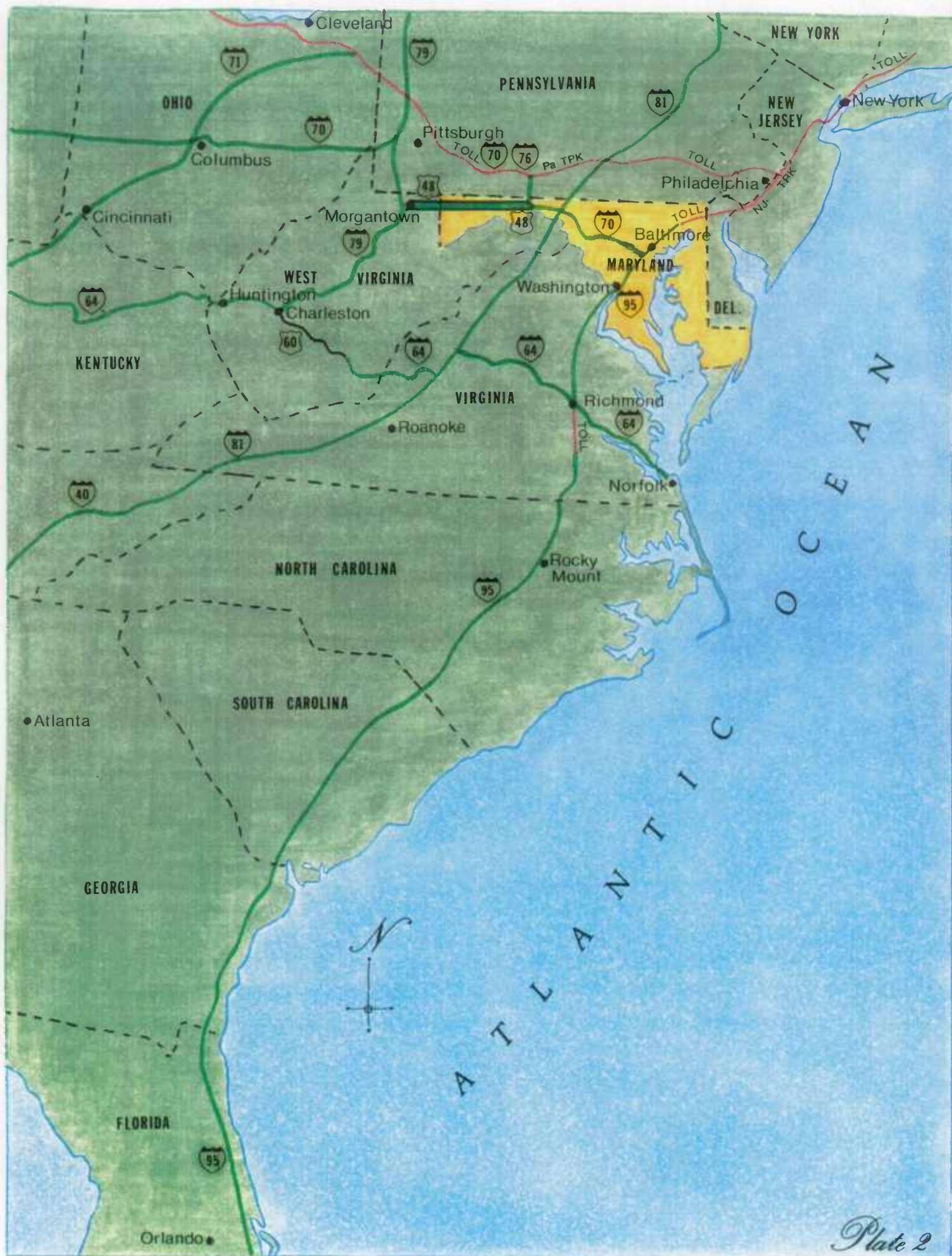
(Source: Research & Analysis Dept., MD Dept. of Human Resources)

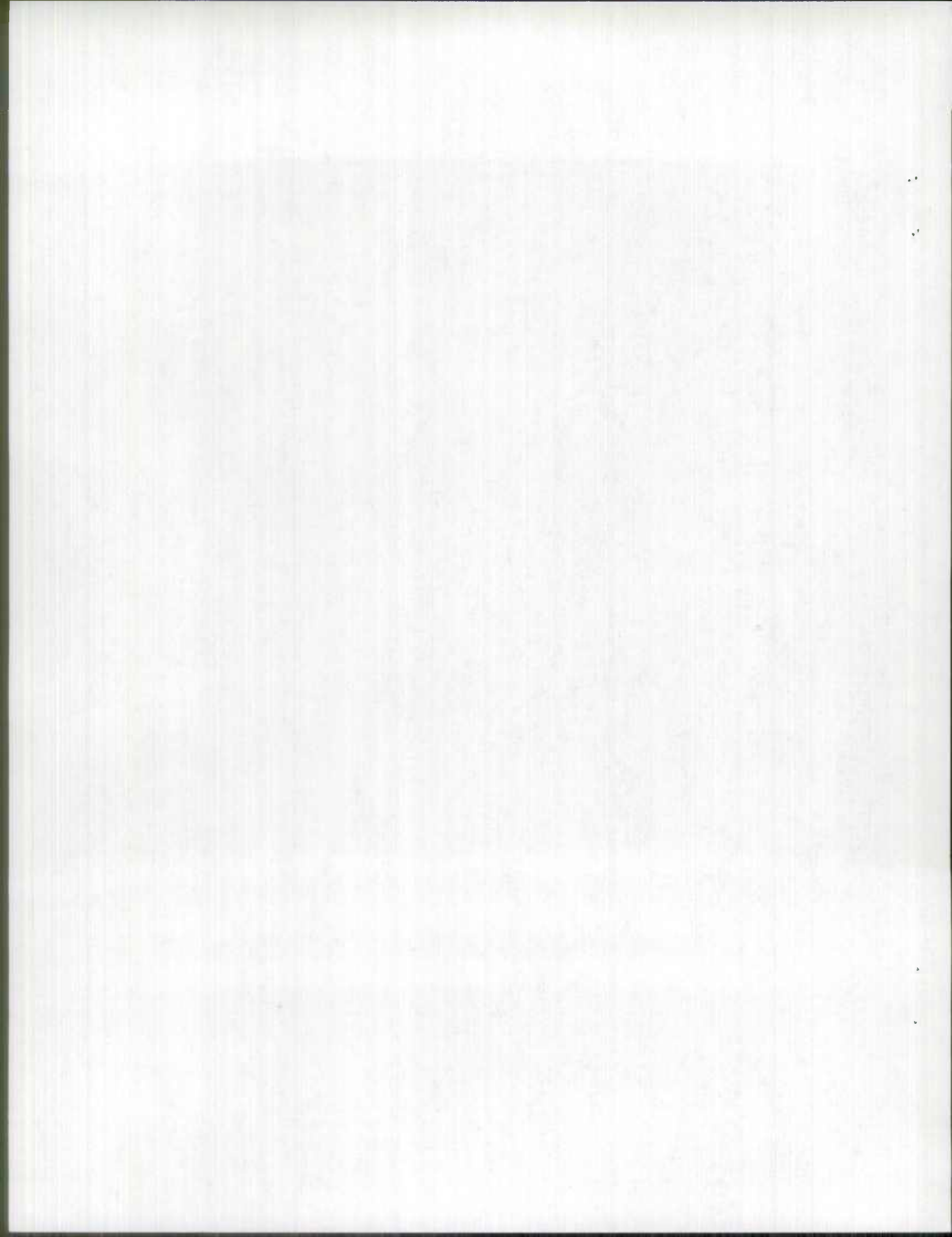
There will be a very positive long-range economic impact in the Appalachian region, of not only Maryland, but also of Virginia and West Virginia, if US 48 is classified as Interstate. The Interstate shield on US 48 would signify to travelers a certain level of service and road condition. They can anticipate the provision of services to meet personal needs (rest areas and diners) and auto needs (gas and auto repair stations) and at the same time feel assured of safe and comfortable road conditions. Entrepreneurs, well aware of the Interstate attraction to travelers, will be eager to provide these expected services. They will join those industries currently along US 48 which will give rise to more jobs, and a variety of them. Once these services are established, they will attract a variety of travelers, be they truckers or tourists.





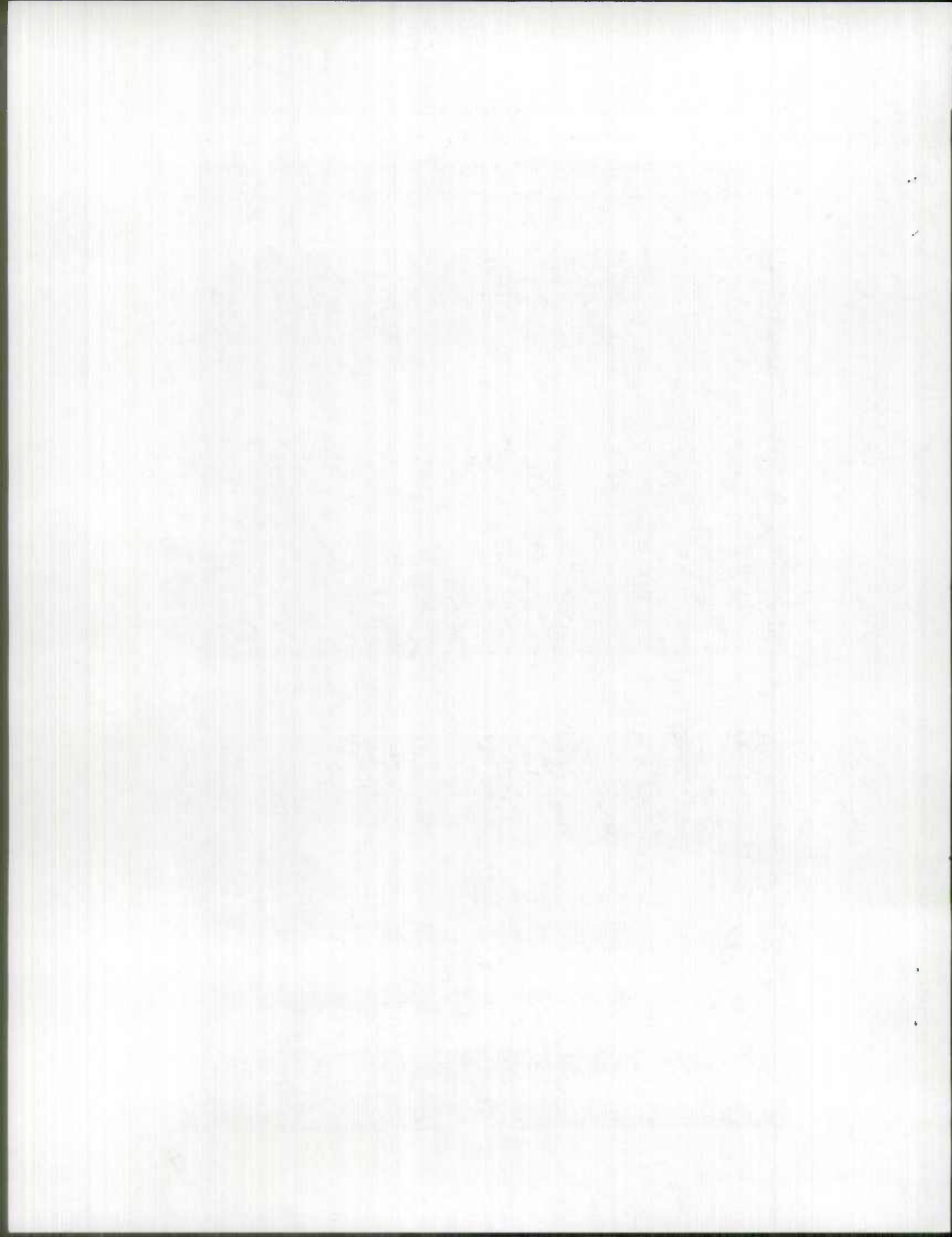






Not only the comfortable road conditions and provision of services, but the aesthetic appeal of the area due to US 48's placement in such beautiful natural surroundings will draw the tourists and keep them returning to and through the area.



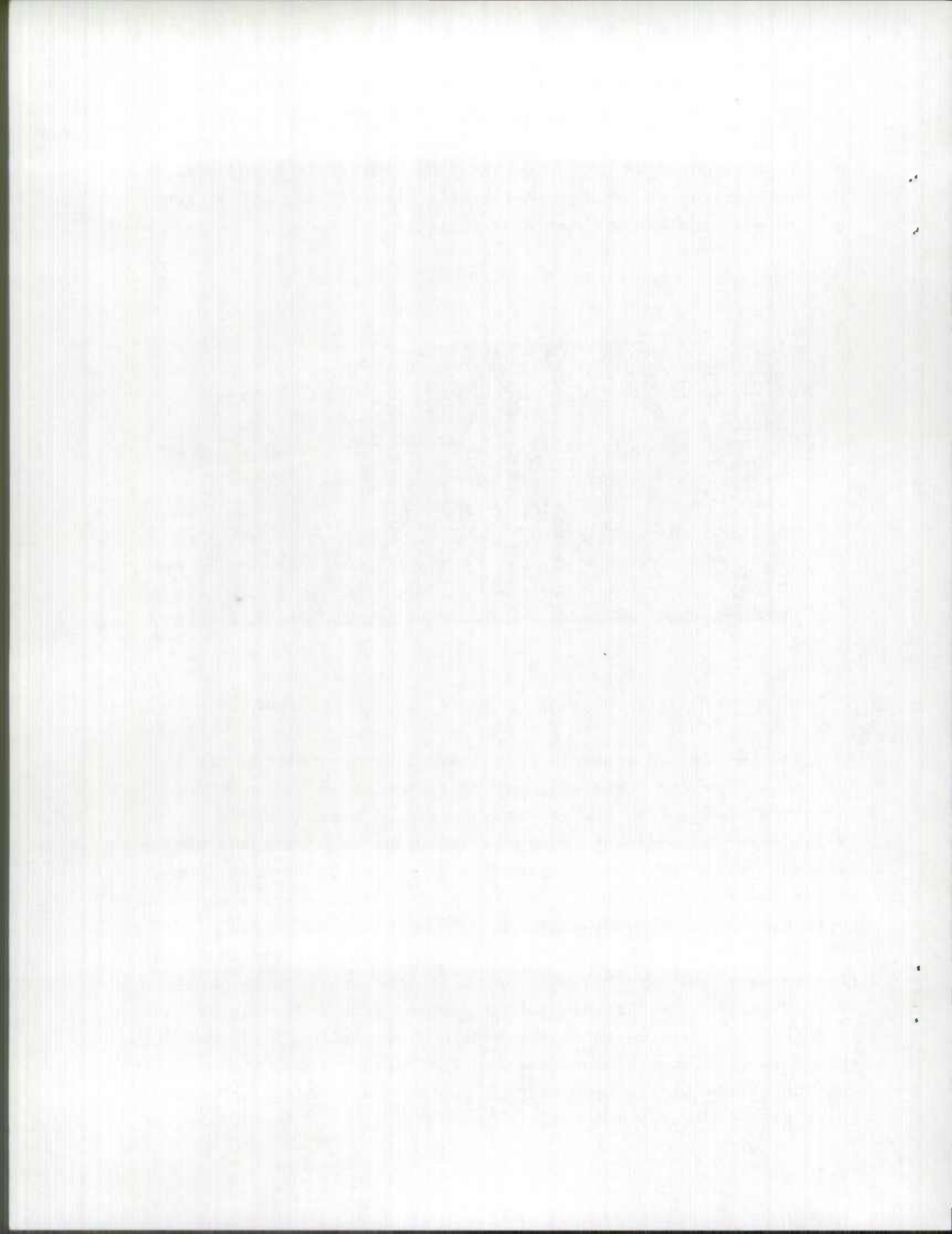


Also, Sideling Hill, situated west of Hancock, Maryland, is a fascinating geologic exhibit and its unveiling a technological accomplishment; many tourists will include it on their "sights to see in Maryland" list. The tourist stop, currently being designed for construction at Sideling Hill, will provide them with a spot to rest and view the Hill at their leisure. (Photo 2)



The safety and economic benefits will extend throughout the Appalachian region, from the Port of Baltimore in the east to industrial centers in the midwest, providing a route which facilitates the movement of people and goods in a safe and timely fashion. West Virginia has proposed to extend US 48 west from Morgantown and this will extend the highway's benefits even further.

It [is the only toll-free link in the east/west corridor that runs between southern Virginia and northern Pennsylvania, a gap of over 200 miles. Tolls will not be removed from I-76 (Pennsylvania Turnpike), nor are capacity improvements planned. US 48 would therefore supplement interstate traffic capacity, filling a gap in the Interstate System by providing another major east/west interstate route. (See Plate II)]



V. DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS

US 48 from Hancock, Maryland through to Morgantown, West Virginia has been designed to the highest type expressway standards and approved by the Appalachian Region Commission and the Federal Highway Administration. The only notable exception is a 1.4 mile portion through Cumberland -- an urban area with an average daily traffic of 20,000 -- which at the time it was constructed in the early 1960's was of acceptable design. By today's standards, the horizontal and vertical alignments meet minimum interstate design. The interchanging of traffic is accomplished by use of ramps with short tapers and right off - right on connections using small radii. In all cases exit and entrance maneuvers are made from auxiliary lanes; in most cases deceleration lanes are provided in addition to auxiliary lanes.

Several improvements have been made, though, to address these problem areas. Additional warning signs have been placed to alert motorists to upcoming speed reductions. On the western approach to Cumberland, there are no less than 30 signs located in 10 miles warning of reductions from 55 mph for cars and 45 mph for trucks to 40 mph for both. Other improvements include construction of a 630 foot long, 7 and 1/2 foot high concrete wall with steel reinforcement to contain and redirect vehicles (a cost of \$600,000), and construction of an emergency pullover for trucks east of Vocke Road on Haystack Mountain. This pullover allows truckers who are in the area and having brake problems to stop and cool their brakes before descending Haystack Mountain. All exit areas are clearly marked and signed to eliminate driver confusion. (Photos 3, 4, and 5)



Moose curve before and after construction of the retaining wall. The auxilliary lane and the additional decel lane for exit 43 A are also notable.

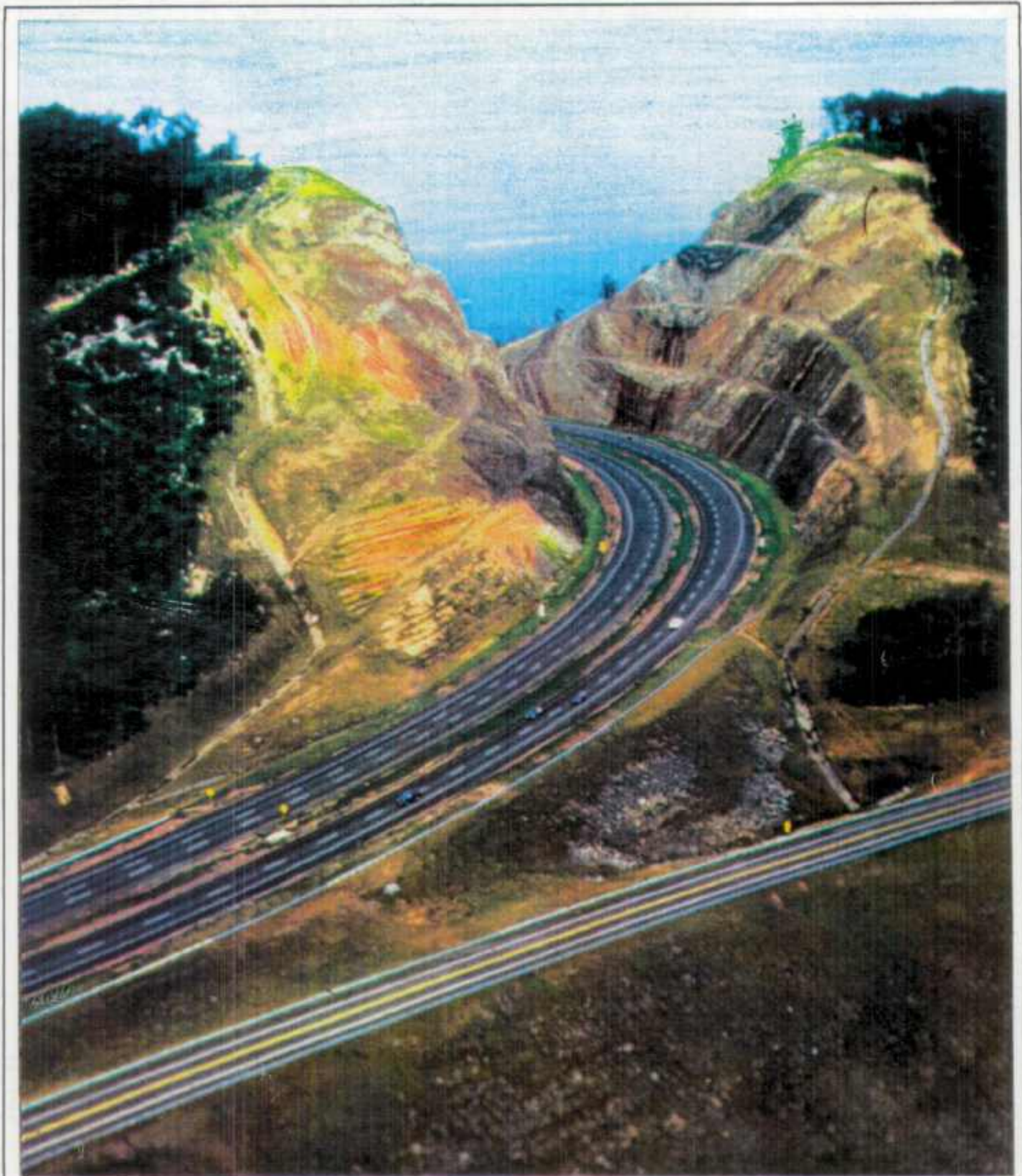




These substandard sections often occur on the Interstate System, especially urbanized areas. Examples include:

1. I-83, Jones Falls Expressway in Baltimore, Maryland;
2. I-83, at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania;
3. I-76, Pennsylvania Turnpike west of I-70;
4. I-287, New York Thruway;
5. I-85, at Atlanta, Georgia; and
6. I-95, at Providence, Connecticut

A design exception is requested for this section. We understand that it is not uncommon for interstate projects to be approved with some form of design exception being granted.



**National
Freeway**

**Request for Interstate Determination
for
U.S.48
"The National Freeway"
from
Hancock, Maryland
to
Morgantown, West Virginia**



***Maryland
Department of
Transportation***
STATE HIGHWAY
ADMINISTRATION

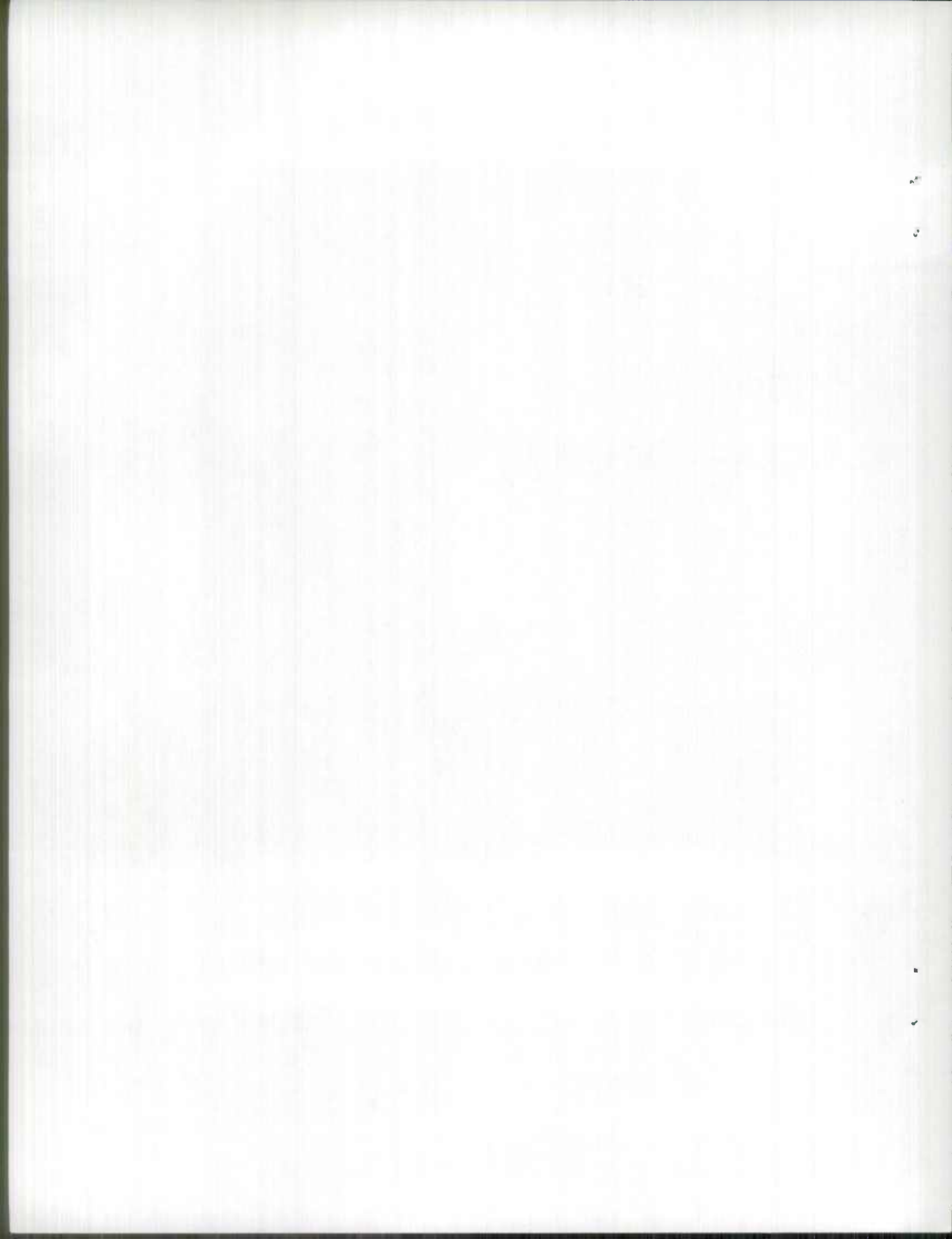
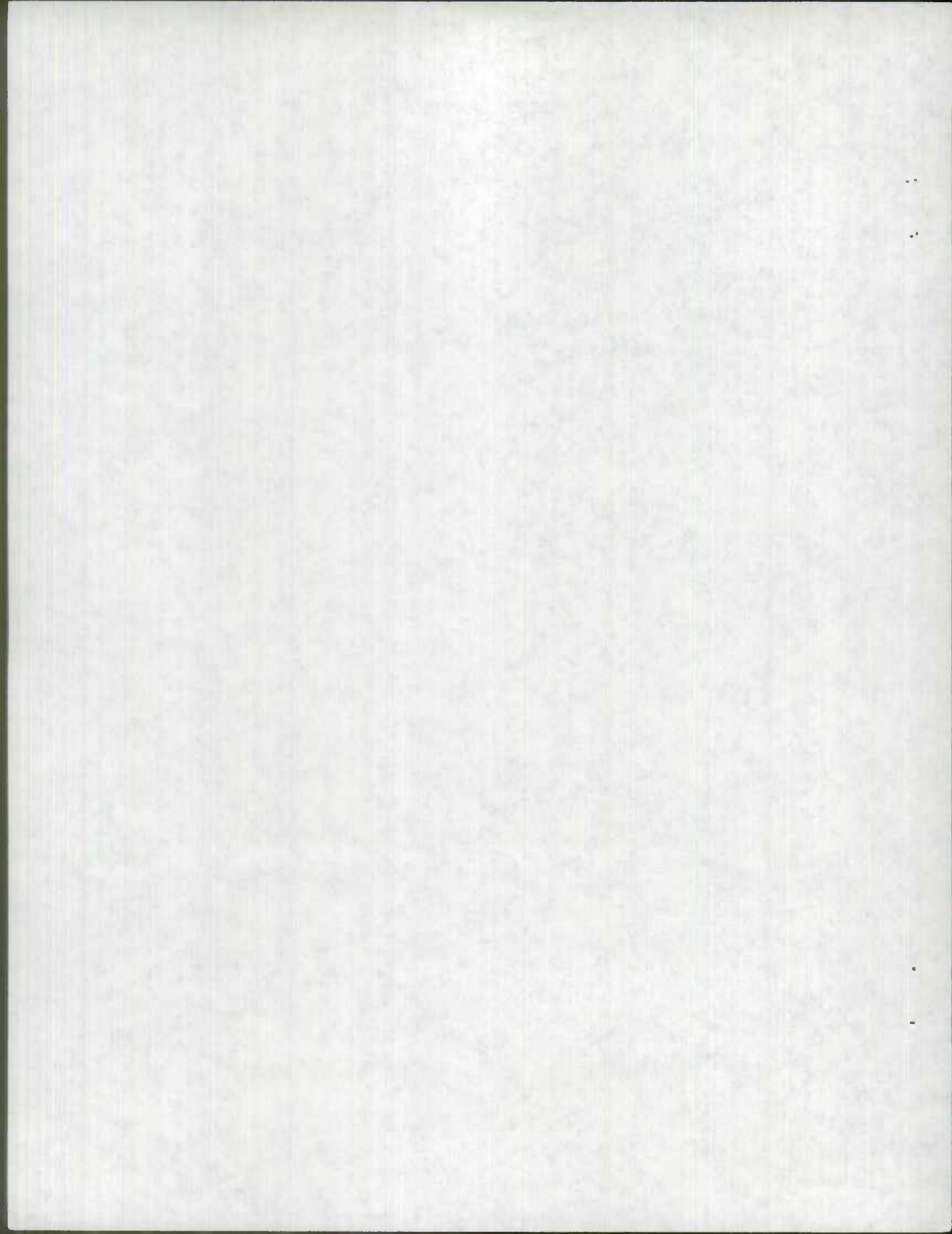


TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
I Summary	1
II Background	3
III Description	4
IV Desirability/Need	5
V Design Characteristics	8
VI Concluding Remarks	11

PLATES

	After Page
I Sub-Regional Map	4
II Regional Map	4



REQUEST TO DESIGNATE US 48 AS INTERSTATE

I. SUMMARY

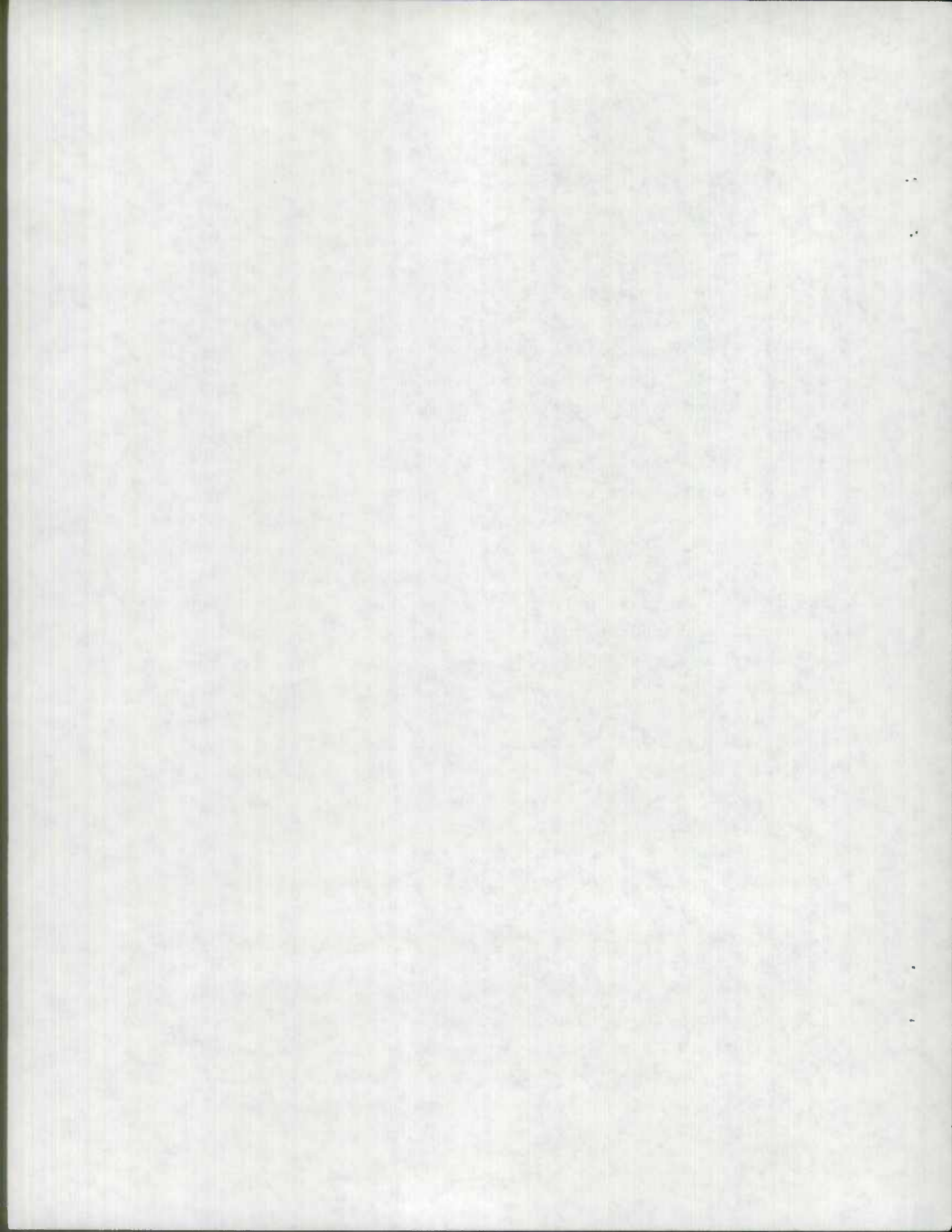
The last section of the National Freeway -- US 48 -- is currently under construction and scheduled to open to traffic by 1991. This "last link" between Hancock, Maryland and I-79 in Morgantown, West Virginia will open the way to safe, high-speed regional travel. (See Plate I)

US 48's placement in the multi-state highway network is strategic, filling a gap in the Interstate System for another major east/west interstate connection. It links the Port of Baltimore directly to Morgantown, WV and points west and facilitates travel to all areas of the country, including the Ports of New York, Philadelphia, and Norfolk.

There is no major east/west interstate connector that runs between I-70/76 in Pennsylvania and I-64 in Virginia. If US 48 is designated Interstate, it would provide motorists and the trucking industry with another major interstate travel route, especially since I-70/76 is toll, will continue as such, and will not be expanded to accommodate additional traffic. (See Plate II)

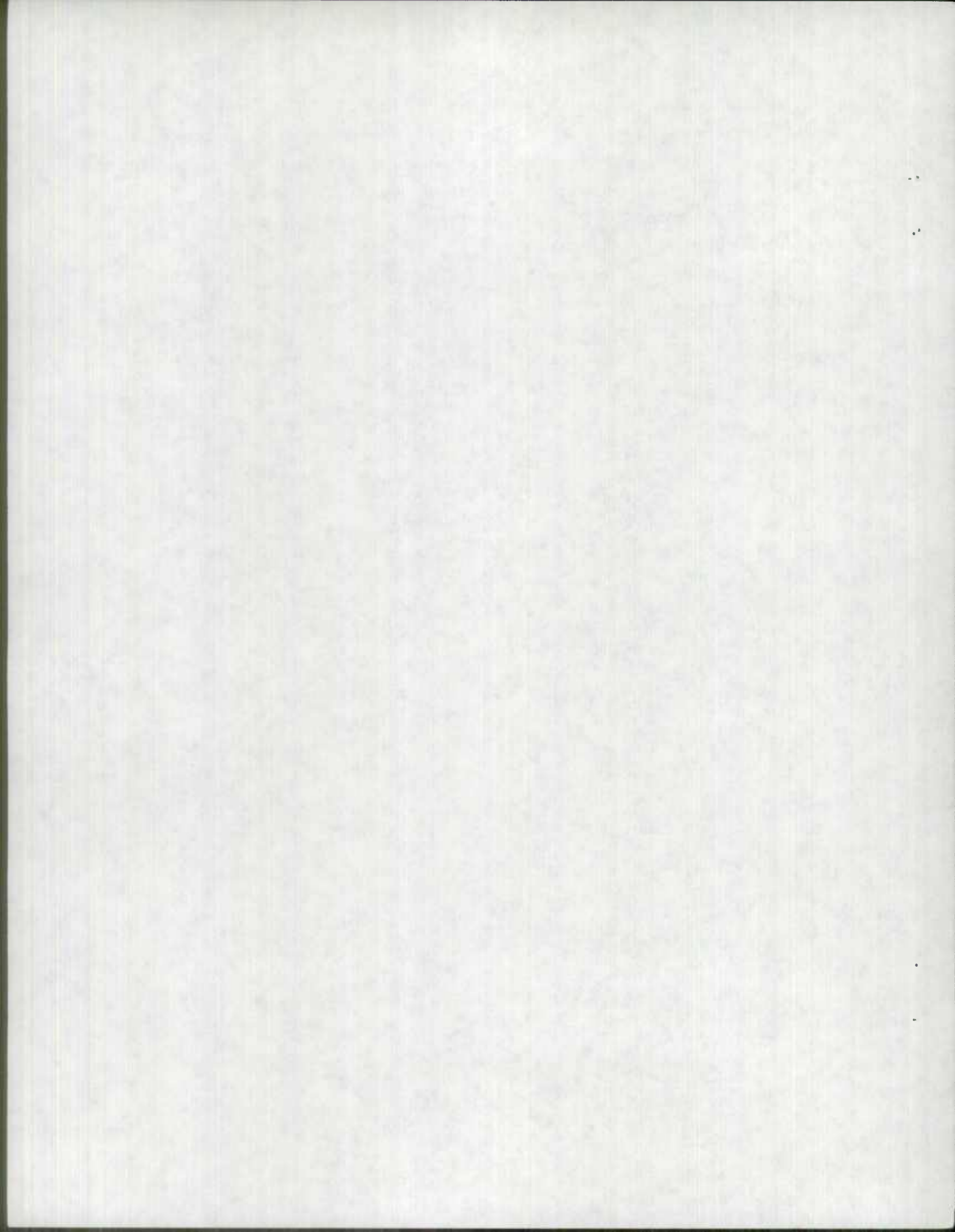
In terms of the regional economy, an Interstate designation through this portion of the Appalachian region would be very beneficial. The Interstate shield will signify to travelers the presence of services and good road conditions and will assist in retaining existing industries, attracting new industries and service facilities, and encourage tourism, further stimulating economic development in the area.

Section 139 of Title 23, US Code, as amended by the 1973 Federal Highway Act specifically addresses additions to the Interstate System. Subsection (a) of this section provides for the addition of an existing route to the Interstate System when such a facility meets the requirements of being on the Federal Aid Primary System and would have a logical addition or connection to the Interstate System. Subsection (b) of this section provides for the addition of a facility which is not yet constructed to Interstate standards, providing that the segment is completed to Interstate standards within twelve years and represents a logical



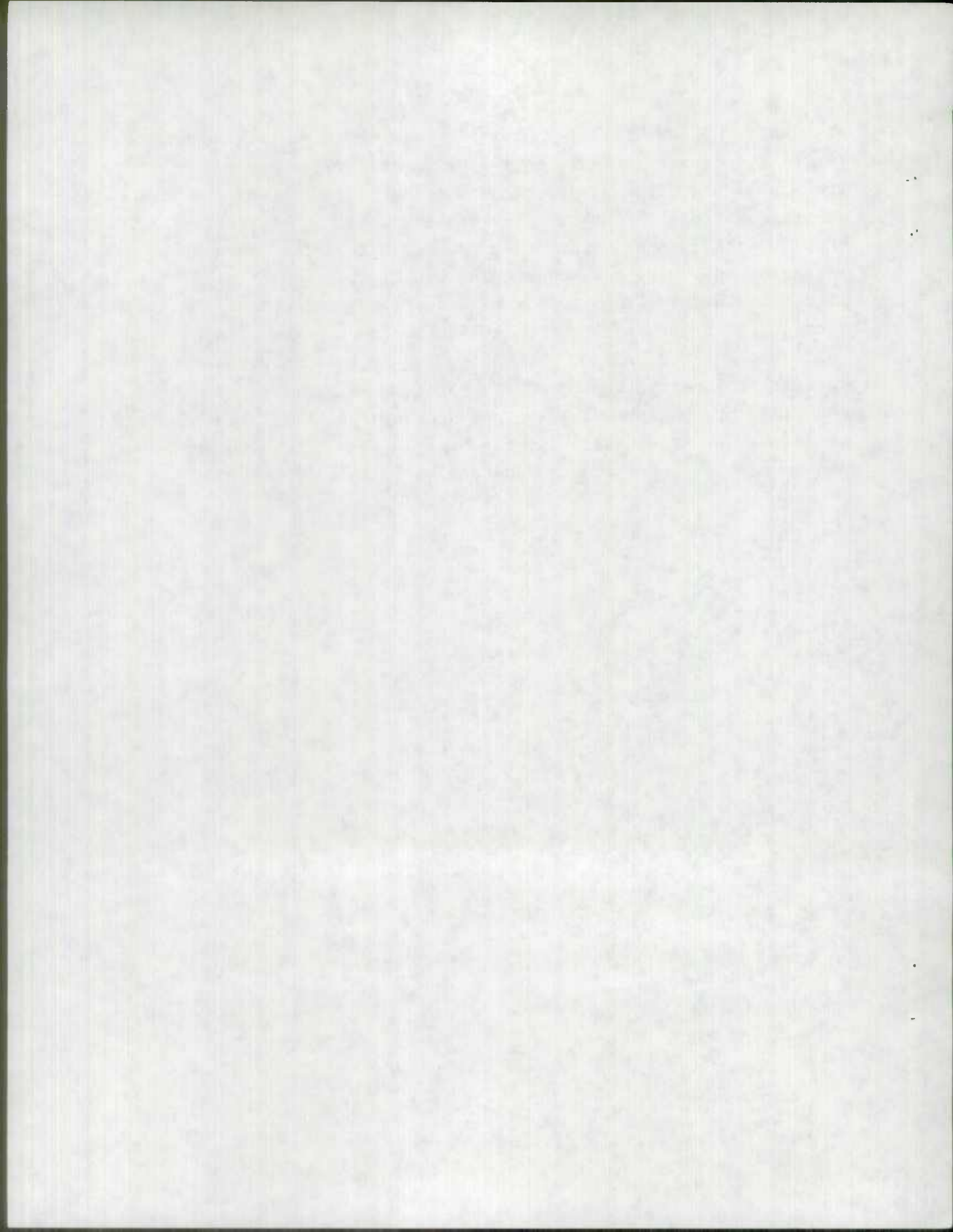
addition or connection. In addition, this subsection specifically prohibits referring to such a highway segment as an Interstate highway in any Federal or State law, regulation, map, document or other record until the highway is completed. The approval authority for Section 139 sub- sections (a) and (b) rests with the US Secretary of Transportation.

This request to designate US 48 as Interstate is submitted under Section (b) as defined above. If designated as such, the National Freeway will open the way not only to safe, high-speed regional and interstate travel, but also to the development of a central and vital Appalachian heartland.



II. BACKGROUND

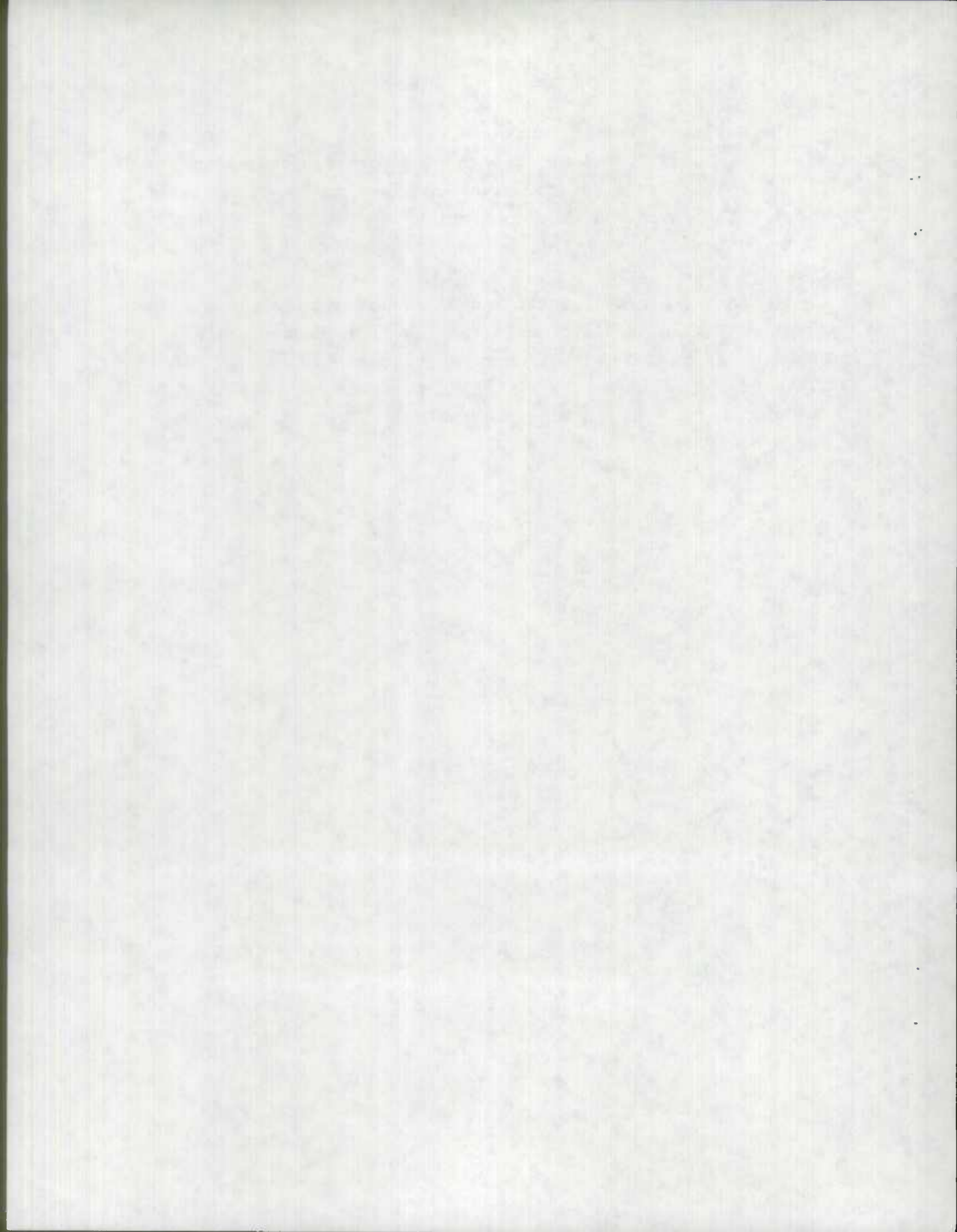
[US 48 was originally conceived in an effort initiated in the 1960s to increase economic activity in the Appalachian Region. The Appalachian Highway Program was the principal funding source for this National Freeway.] A severe cutback of these funds coupled with the fact that other funding categories, such as primary funds, were stretched thin, would have made it difficult, if not impossible, for the State of Maryland to complete the last section of the project, a 19-mile section east of Cumberland from Wolfe Mill to M.V. Smith. A request for 50 million dollars in interstate substitute discretionary money was submitted to the Federal Highway Administration and granted for this "last link" to be completed. The entire 19 mile gap section will be under construction by this summer and open to traffic by 1991.



III. DESCRIPTION

The National Freeway, once complete, will be a one hundred eleven mile long, four lane divided, controlled access Interstate-type facility, with strategic placement in a multi-state highway network. It provides direct connections to I-79 to the west and I-70 to the east, between Morgantown, West Virginia and Hancock, Maryland. (See Plate I)

It links the mid-Atlantic region (Washington, DC, and Baltimore, including the Port of Baltimore) with the central Appalachian Region and major industrial centers in the Ohio River Valley and the midwest. It will also facilitate travel to I-70/76 in Pennsylvania, I-64 in Virginia and West Virginia, and I-81 to I-78 in New York. (See Plate II)



IV. DESIRABILITY/NEED IN THE APPALACHIAN REGION

As can be seen in the following table, unemployment rates in Allegany County (typical of many Appalachian Counties) and Western Maryland are considerably higher than in Maryland as a whole.

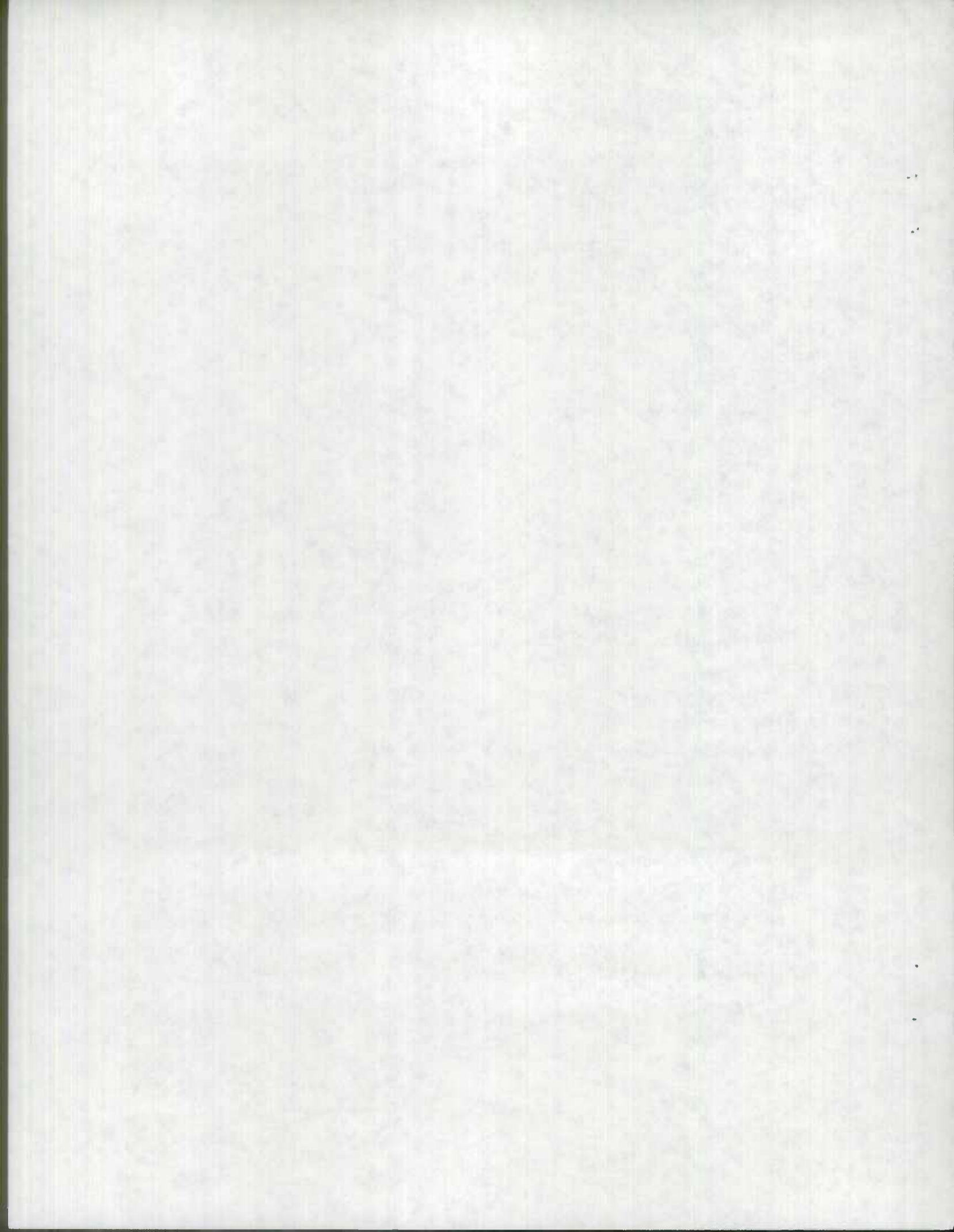
TABLE I

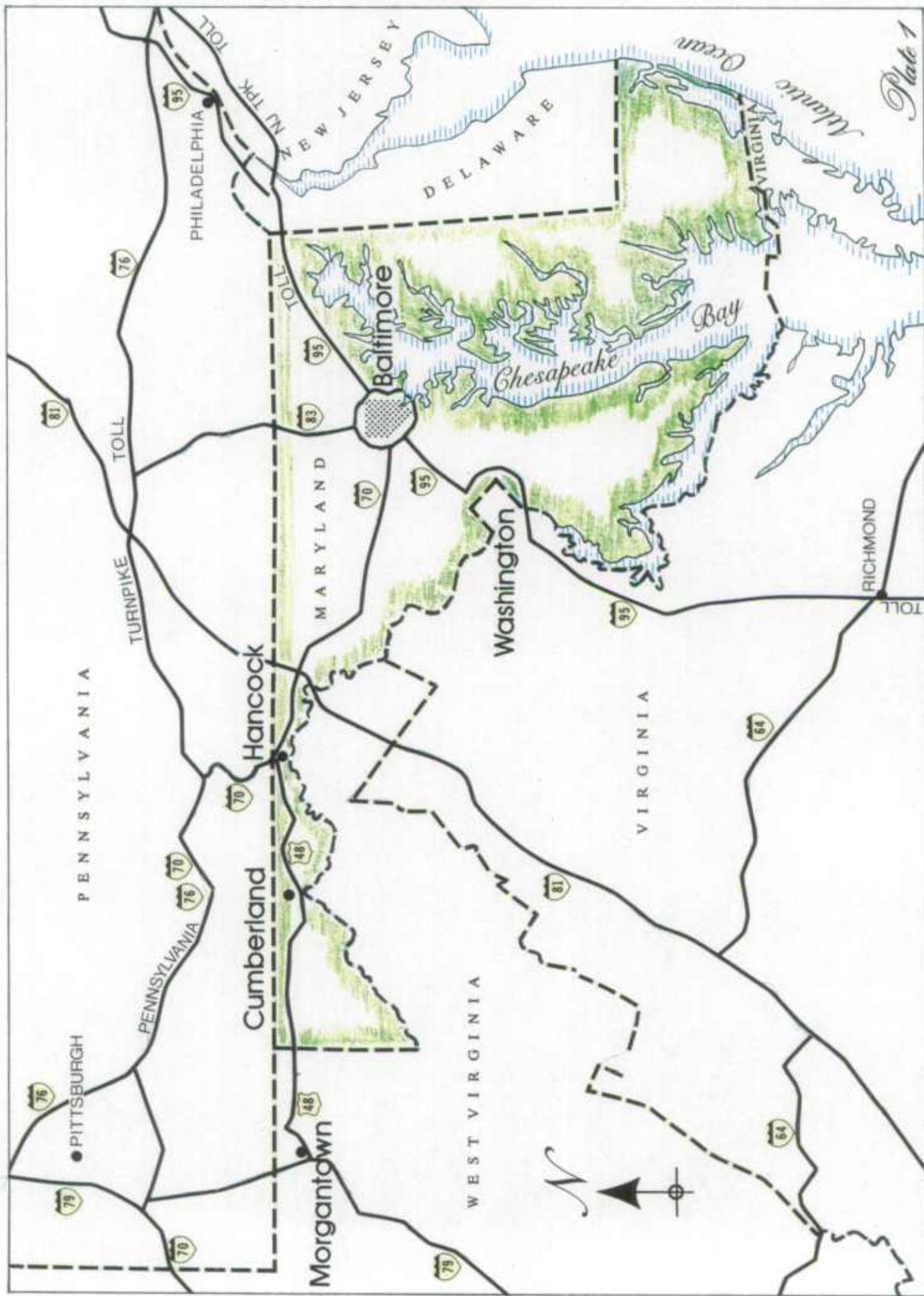
	Unemployment rate (%)		
	<u>Allegany County</u>	<u>Western Maryland</u>	
<u>Maryland</u>			
December 1980	9.5	9.2	6.2
December 1981	14.0	12.6	8.0
December 1982	15.1	13.1	8.4
December 1983	11.7	9.9	5.7
December 1984	9.5	8.6	5.3
December 1985	9.1	8.5	4.6
December 1986	8.9	8.1	4.5
December 1987	10.1	7.9	4.2

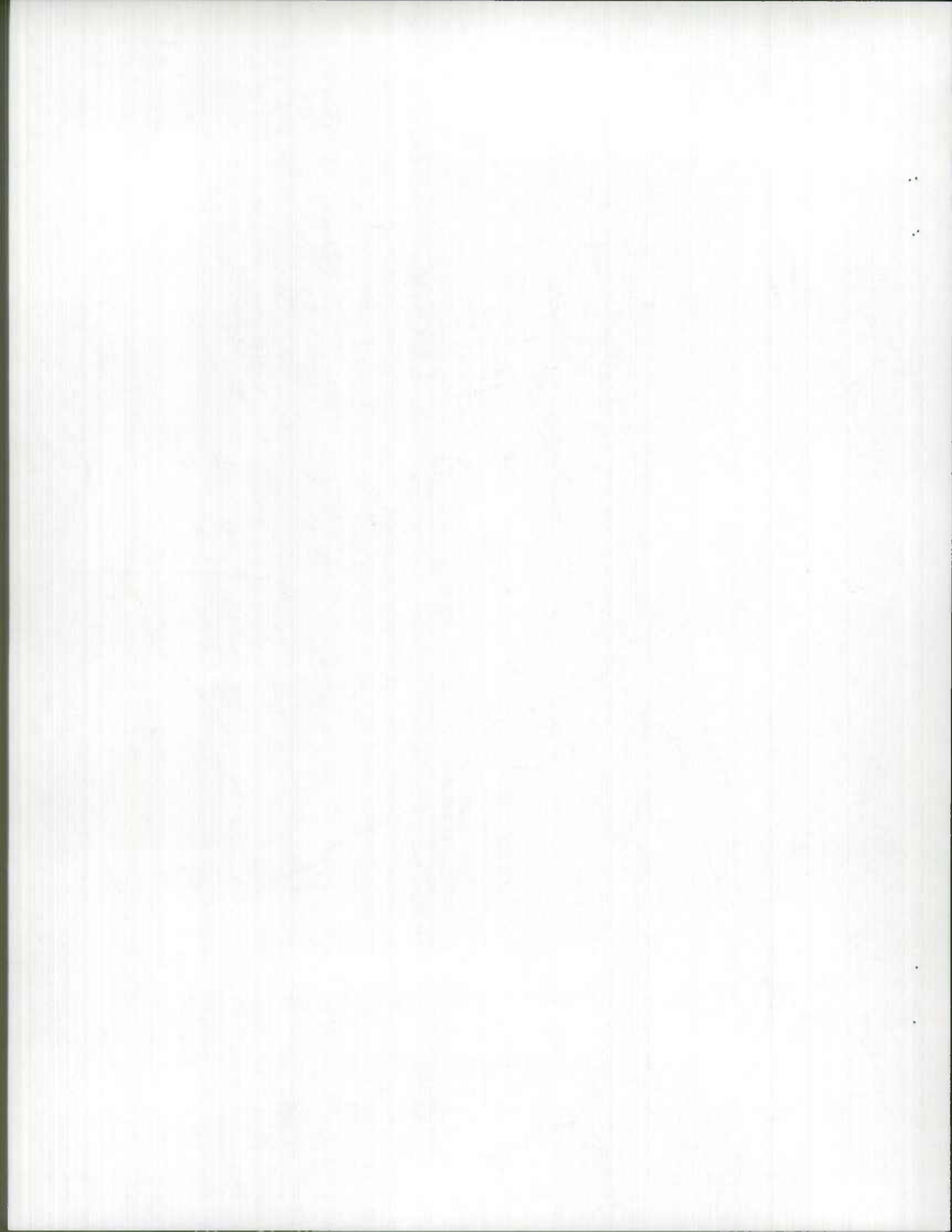
NOTE: West Virginia's data will be added to this table later.

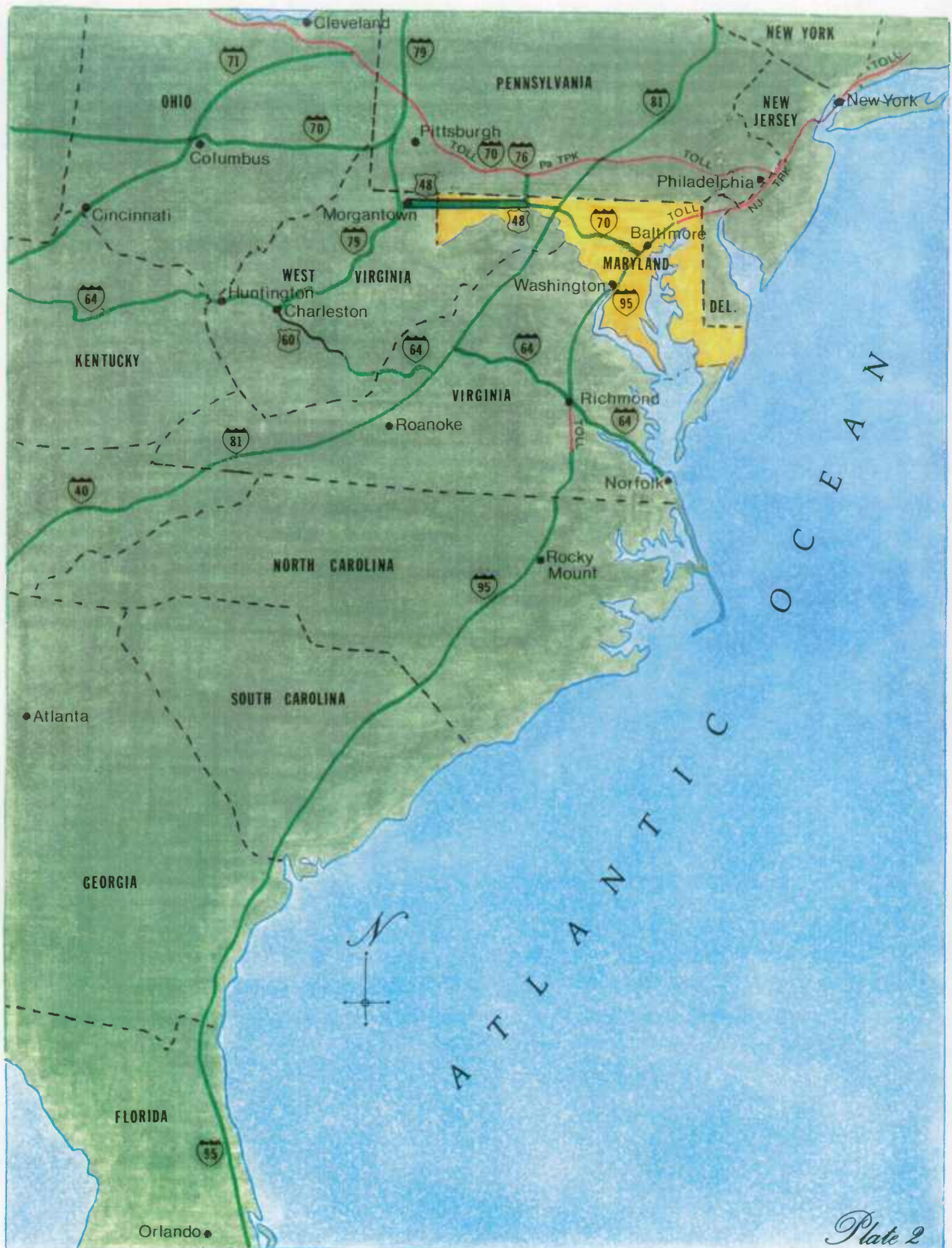
(Source: Research & Analysis Dept., MD Dept. of Human Resources)

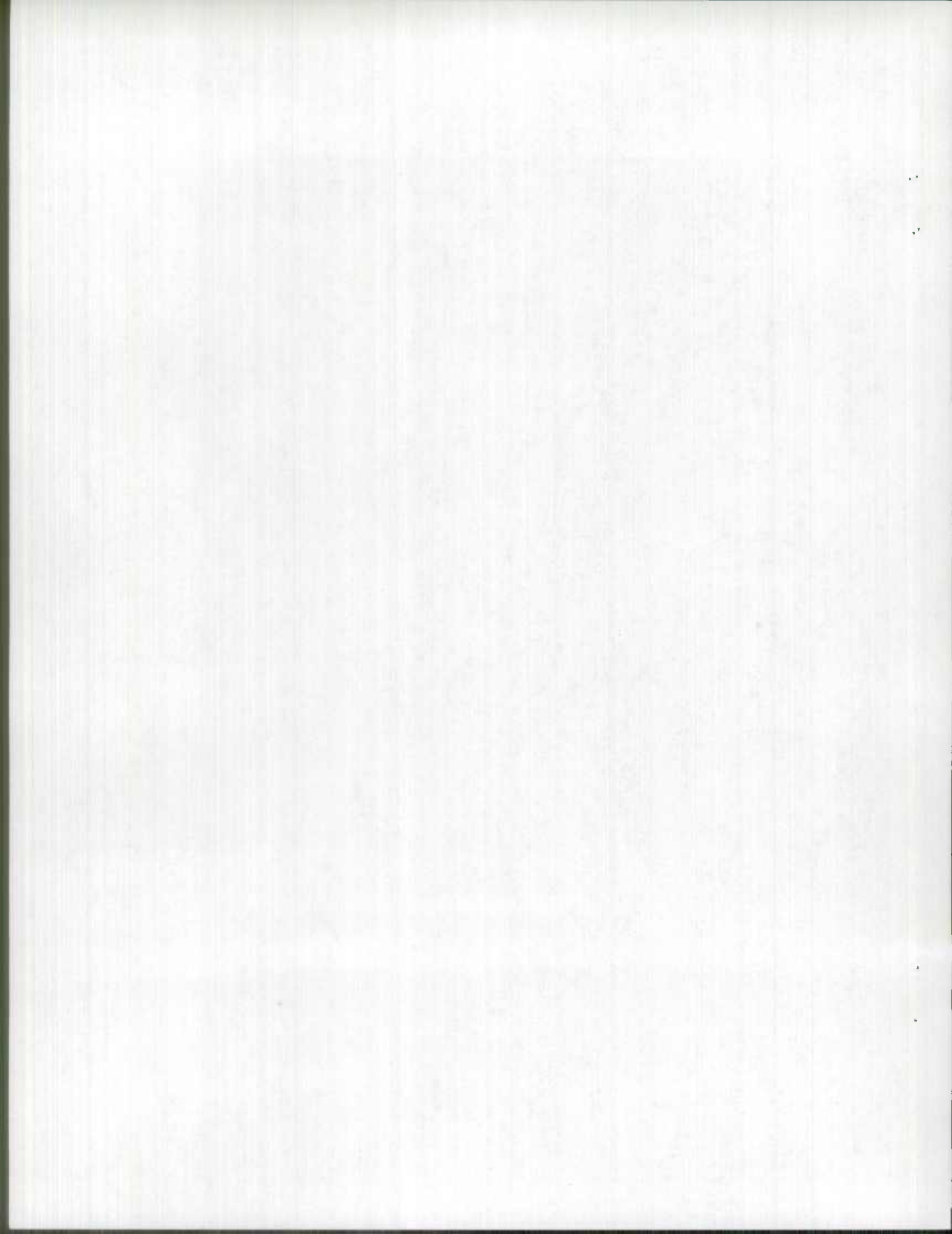
There will be a very positive long-range economic impact in the Appalachian region, of not only Maryland, but also of Virginia and West Virginia, if US 48 is classified as Interstate. The Interstate shield on US 48 would signify to travelers a certain level of service and road condition. They can anticipate the provision of services to meet personal needs (rest areas and diners) and auto needs (gas and auto repair stations) and at the same time feel assured of safe and comfortable road conditions. Entrepreneurs, well aware of the Interstate attraction to travelers, will be eager to provide these expected services. They will join those industries currently along US 48 which will give rise to more jobs, and a variety of them. Once these services are established, they will attract a variety of travelers, be they truckers or tourists.











Not only the comfortable road conditions and provision of services, but the aesthetic appeal of the area due to US 48's placement in such beautiful natural surroundings will draw the tourists and keep them returning to and through the area.

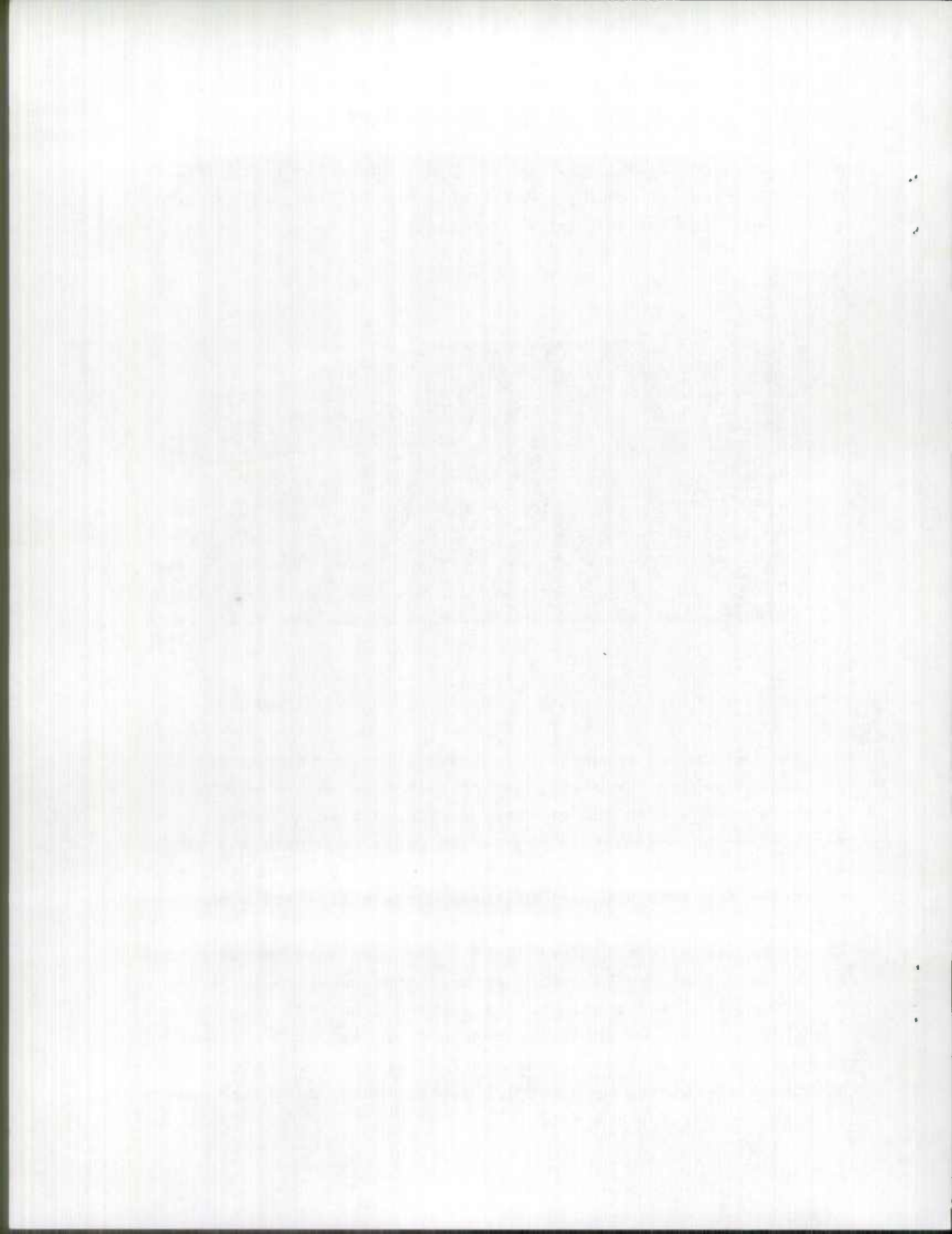


Also, Sideling Hill, situated west of Hancock, Maryland, is a fascinating geologic exhibit and its unveiling a technological accomplishment; many tourists will include it on their "sights to see in Maryland" list. The tourist stop, currently being designed for construction at Sideling Hill, will provide them with a spot to rest and view the Hill at their leisure. (Photo 2)



The safety and economic benefits will extend throughout the Appalachian region, from the Port of Baltimore in the east to industrial centers in the midwest, providing a route which facilitates the movement of people and goods in a safe and timely fashion. West Virginia has proposed to extend US 48 west from Morgantown and this will extend the highway's benefits even further.

It [is the only toll-free link in the east/west corridor that runs between southern Virginia and northern Pennsylvania, a gap of over 200 miles. Tolls will not be removed from I-76 (Pennsylvania Turnpike), nor are capacity improvements planned. US 48 would therefore supplement interstate traffic capacity, filling a gap in the Interstate System by providing another major east/west interstate route. (See Plate II)]



V. DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS

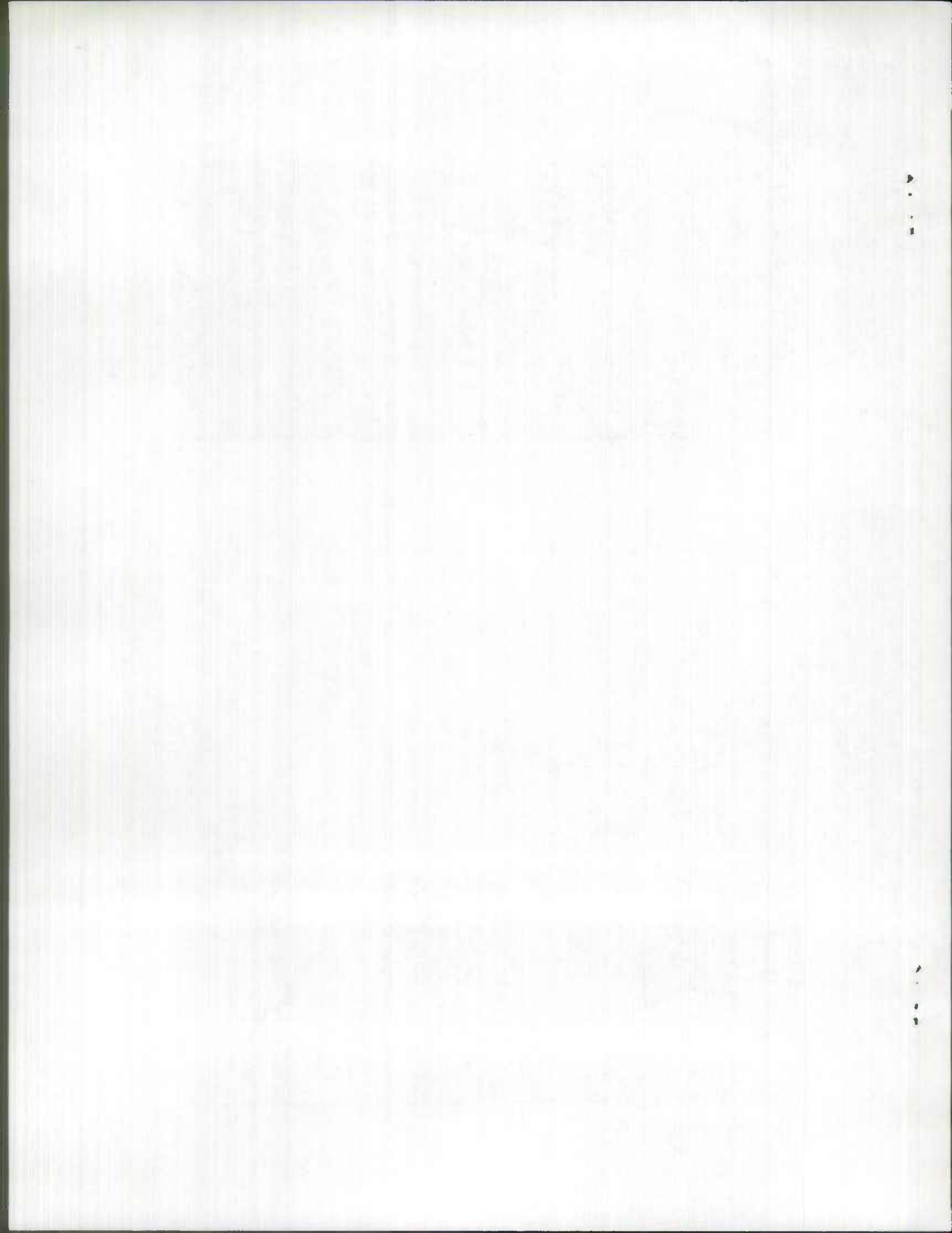
US 48 from Hancock, Maryland through to Morgantown, West Virginia has been designed to the highest type expressway standards and approved by the Appalachian Region Commission and the Federal Highway Administration. The only notable exception is a 1.4 mile portion through Cumberland -- an urban area with an average daily traffic of 20,000 -- which at the time it was constructed in the early 1960's was of acceptable design. By today's standards, the horizontal and vertical alignments meet minimum interstate design. The interchanging of traffic is accomplished by use of ramps with short tapers and right off - right on connections using small radii. In all cases exit and entrance maneuvers are made from auxiliary lanes; in most cases deceleration lanes are provided in addition to auxiliary lanes.

Several improvements have been made, though, to address these problem areas. Additional warning signs have been placed to alert motorists to upcoming speed reductions. On the western approach to Cumberland, there are no less than 30 signs located in 10 miles warning of reductions from 55 mph for cars and 45 mph for trucks to 40 mph for both. Other improvements include construction of a 630 foot long, 7 and 1/2 foot high concrete wall with steel reinforcement to contain and redirect vehicles (a cost of \$600,000), and construction of an emergency pullover for trucks east of Vocke Road on Haystack Mountain. This pullover allows truckers who are in the area and having brake problems to stop and cool their brakes before descending Haystack Mountain. All exit areas are clearly marked and signed to eliminate driver confusion. (Photos 3, 4, and 5)



Moose curve before and after construction of the retaining wall. The auxilliary lane and the additional decel lane for exit 43 A are also notable.







These substandard sections often occur on the Interstate System, especially urbanized areas. Examples include:

1. I-83, Jones Falls Expressway in Baltimore, Maryland;
2. I-83, at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania;
3. I-76, Pennsylvania Turnpike west of I-70;
4. I-287, New York Thruway;
5. I-85, at Atlanta, Georgia; and
6. I-95, at Providence, Connecticut

A design exception is requested for this section. We understand that it is not uncommon for interstate projects to be approved with some form of design exception being granted.

